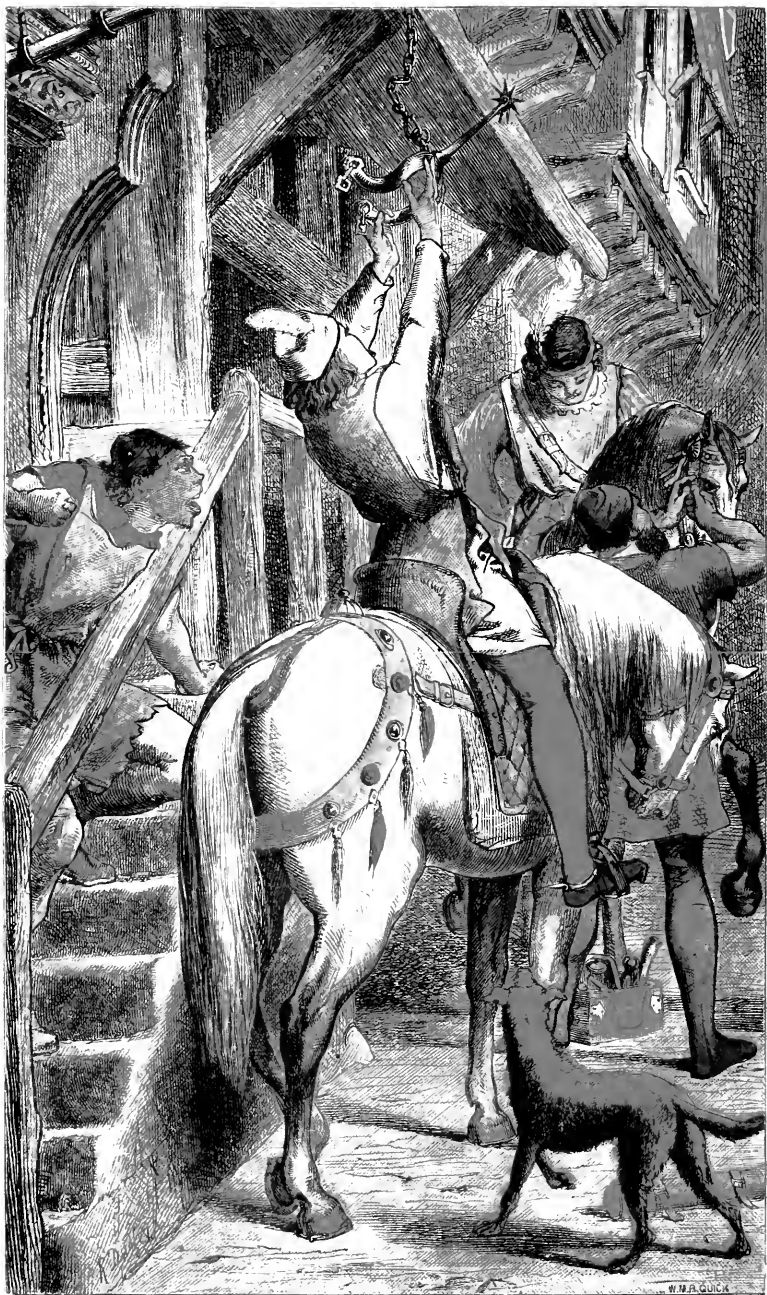




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ENVAILED BARNES REMOVES THE STURRIER'S SIGN.

HUBERT ELLIS.

A Story of

KING RICHARD'S DAYS THE SECOND.



LONDON :

S. O. BEETON, 248 STRAND, W.C.

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HUBERT ELLIS;

A Story of

KING RICHARD'S DAYS THE SECOND.

BY

FRANCIS DAVENANT,

AUTHOR OF

“RALPH DE WALDEN,” &c.



LONDON:

WARD, LOCK, AND TYLER.

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P R E F A C E.

SOME time ago, when my friend, Mr. BEETON, invited me to write for the "Boy's Own Magazine" a story "such as poor EDGAR" used to write, I hesitated between a desire to accept the offer of an occupation so thoroughly congenial to me, and doubt as to my ability to undertake it.

There were other considerations, also, to make me pause. Foremost among them was the natural shrinking from stepping into a place which Death had made vacant—a shrinking especially strong in this case, where "poor EDGAR'S" death had been as unexpected as it was mourned. For all who knew him respected him and liked him — knew him for a kind-hearted, good fellow, as well as a most painstaking, conscientious discharger of whatsoever his hand found to do; a well-read man, but no pedant; a lover of his work, and one who felt with all his heart the chivalrous spirit of the men whose deeds he delighted to chronicle.

To come after such a man was no light thing, and it was not modesty, but a serious apprehension of the position, that made me hesitate about filling the empty seat.

The doubt as to whether, apart from this, my shoulders were broad enough to wear the mantle of him who had won a name in the minds of thousands of English lads, by his attractive stories attractively told, and had made friends of them through the medium of his pen, swayed my mind, and whispered me to decline ; but the further thought that this might act as a spur, more strongly perhaps than a deterrent, backed up as it was by the kind encouragement which my friend Mr. BEETON gave, determined me to accept the offer that was made.

I found the work, as I anticipated, a most congenial one, and with the abundant aid which was afforded me in the shape of rich materials for history, by the kindness of several friends, I buckled to my work with a will, and the result is before my readers.

While fully aware of imperfections which may be found on reviewing the book, I am not without hope that in the main it will be credited with accuracy and some interest. No pains have been spared in the discharge of my duty, and I trust to find, in the approval of my readers, a justification for the course which Mr. BEETON adopted when he asked me to write a story, "such as poor EDGAR" used to write.

FRANCIS DAVENANT.

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HUBERT ELLIS:

A STORY OF KING RICHARD'S DAYS THE SECOND.

INTRODUCTORY.



WRITING the following pages, which contain the memoirs or personal history of one who actually lived in the time of Edward III. and Richard II., and who is not a mere creature of the imagination, there have been several difficulties to encounter. There has been the difficulty of telling a story, essentially old, in language sufficiently modern to make it in-

telligible to readers of the present day. The language in which the memoirs themselves, or the materials from which they have been derived, are written, is the same as that in which the poet Geoffrey Chaucer wrote his poems; and a glance at his works will serve to show that, had this story been written in his language, very few indeed would have been able to read it.

When he wrote, the English language as now spoken was only being formed. The words which we now speak of as derived from the Saxon—and there are as many as sixty-five out of every hundred English words which are so derived—were then written more like the Saxon derivatives themselves; indeed, they were pure Saxon; and though, after some painstaking and study, we may recognise in them the old forms of modern words, it does require that painstaking and acquaintance with the old language to enable us to make them out. Thus “carpettis,” “enmyes,” “sikerlye,” “inowgh,” “togedre,” “idoo,” are now written “carpets,” “enemies,” “surely,” “enough,” “together,” “done.” We should not at first sight, perhaps, understand this; and if all the words were spelt in the old way, we might as well be set to read so much double Dutch, unless we had gone through a course of instruction to make us acquainted with them. Then there are many words which have, as it were, slipped out of the language—slipped through—which were current and perfectly correct in Chaucer’s time, such as “shent” (ruined), “selcouthe” (strange), “quentise” (cunning), “reede” (counsel): now we should want a dictionary to find out what they meant. There was also a very large admixture of French or Norman words, since become obsolete. It was not until Edward III.’s time that English as a language could be said to exist. Before his reign the peasants had spoken a dialect of Saxon and Celtic, and the nobles and lords of the soil spoke French. Even in his reign the possession of the French language was considered to be one of the marks of a gentleman. “Jack would be a gentleman if he could speak French” was a saying common enough at the time; the law was written and administered in French, excepting in some of the quite minor courts; French was the language spoken at court; so that it is not surprising to find in the writings of a man like Chaucer a large number of Frenchified words, which, like some of their Saxon companions, have fallen into desuetude, or have so far changed their old dress for a modern garb that they are altogether different-looking from what they were. Edmund Spenser, who wrote in Queen Elizabeth’s time, himself using a

vocabulary not always easy to make out, speaks of Chaucer as the "well of English undefiled"—and so undoubtedly he was; but then the undefiled English that he wrote was the English of the period, a language which, if this story had been written in it, would have made the acts of the people commemorated sealed to those to whom the modern form makes them accessible. This difficulty, therefore, in respect of the mere language, has had to be overcome, and the writer is not without hope that he has succeeded. A few words, perhaps, which would have been spoiled by conversion, have been suffered to remain; but these are accompanied, when they occur, by a modern equivalent.

There has been another difficulty which the writer is not without hope that he has surmounted, and that is the difficulty of investing a story laid in such remote times as those of Richard II. with sufficient attractions to make it interesting. There is a general sort of interest lent by historical associations, and by speaking of that of which all of us know something, more or less, by having heard and read about it in our school time; but this interest more properly belongs to the books of history themselves; and in a story founded on materials drawn from them, something more particular is needed to fix the attention. The magnetic influence which draws one to the perusal of Froissart or Monstrelet, Thomas Walsingham or Stowe, is no longer felt when tried upon a story created out of them. It has, therefore, been necessary to show the persons written about in much the same sort of light as that in which they really appeared. The writer has made them appear in the performance of the acts of daily life, instead of merely relating their historical deeds as facts; and while the greatest pains have been taken to ensure accuracy in mentioning events purely historical, and trouble has not been spared to allow of the introduction of facts not narrated in the general histories, it has been endeavoured to make the description as lifelike as possible, and to make the men long dead speak in their own persons.

An additional value is given to the story in the fact that all the incidents are true, and most of the characters had actual

existence. Philpot, Walworth, Mercer, Sir Hugh Calverley, the noblemen mentioned by name, Wyclif, and the others, are men whose histories survive. They are to be found enshrined in the chronicles of the times; and if the writer has succeeded in brushing off some of the cobwebs which surrounded them, bringing them out into the light, and clothing them with so much personal interest as shall not only make the following story a pleasant one, but also beget a desire in the readers of it to search further for themselves, he will be amply compensated for the trouble he has been at.

Some of the key mottoes to the chapters will serve to give an idea of the English language spoken at the time.

In order to anticipate by an explanation any question that may arise upon the wording of the second part of the title to this story—"A Story of King Richard's Days the Second"—it may be as well to state that the editor has authority for wording it as he has done, in the title of one of Wyclif's books, written about the date at which this story begins. The book is called "Wyckliffe's Wycket, whyche he made in Kyng Ricard's day's the second. A verye brefe diffinition of the wordes Hoc est corpus meum." The "Wycket" was first printed by "Wyllyam Tyndail at Norenburgh (Nuremberg), 1546."

CHAPTER I.

HOW JOHN WYCLIF APPEARED BEFORE BISHOP COURTNEY IN
ST. PAUL'S.

"I smell a loller (Lollard) in the wind, quod he."

CHAUCER—*The Shipman's Tale.*

THE morning of the 19th of February, 1377, was beautifully bright. The birds were singing merrily, and the trees seemed to rejoice with them, as I pushed back the lattice of my bed-room window and looked forth from East Cheap upon the silver Thames.

I was never a lie-a-bed, but this morning I was up and dressed by half-past four, in anticipation of the demand which I knew would be made for my services. My kind and good master, of whom much will be said later, had bidden me attend him as early as might be with the scores of the merchandise he was sending to Master Aldane, at Calais, and to receive his orders about other matters which required despatch, because it behoved him to repair betimes to St. Paul's Church, to give what countenance he might to his dear friend Master Wyclif, who was there to appear before the Bishop of London, and answer the charges which were to be made against him.

For a kind and good man too much can never be done; and though all his lifetime I strove to do my best to serve him, I have often regretted I had not done more. Now that he is gone whither I pray to follow him, and is beyond the reach or the need of service, I reproach myself with the omission of a hundred little things I might have done for him to make his way the smoother while he remained with us.

On this day it was my good fortune to please him by the fulfilment of all that he required. We settled our business before six o'clock had chimed, and by half-past seven I was returning from on board our new carack, *The Leopard*, which lay at anchor off Billingsgate, and had now got her final orders to make all haste to Calais, in time for the grand market to be held in ten days' time. By eight o'clock my master, Master Nicholas Twiford, of Maiden Lane, and Richard Lions, the lapidary, of Dowgate, were afoot and ready to start. Leaving Philpot House, we went through Fenchurch Street, crossed the Langbourne which runs adown it towards the river, and so out on to Cornhill. Here we were joined by one out of the many hundreds then streaming westwards, who will make a figure in this history, my master's tried and trusty friend, Master William Walworth.

"Well met and good morrow, Master Philpot," said Walworth, coming up, and shaking my master's hand in an iron grasp, as if he meant to make him feel the heartiness he felt himself. "Are you going on yonder?"

"As far as to Paul's," said Philpot, "to see what may be seen of our good friend Wyclif, who, Master Twiford tells me, will be hard pressed by charges which are none of the lightest."

"Ay, and sure 'tis so," added Twiford. "I was told but yesterday that he denies the miracle of the Holy Mass, and holds other doctrines no less displeasing to their reverences the clergy."

"For all that he may teach against those drones of monks," said Walworth, "I hold him none the worse. Those fellows have become a clog upon us that must be shaken off somehow, and soon, too. I wonder, for my part, that the bishop should countenance them, for they are a sore hindrance to the parish priests, and set themselves up for their betters. They are scant observers of the authority of the bishops; and were it not for the hold the bishops have at Rome, these Jack priests would have it all their own way with them. But what the mischief makes my lord Duke of Lancaster so forward to aid our friend Wyclif? He was not wont to favour resistance to authority, of whatever sort it might be."

"Ay, that's the point," interposed Philpot: "the duke may love Wyclif much, but he hates Bishop Courtney more. The bishop is a man that will not yield to him as most men will—one that boasts as good blood as a Plantagenet, that knows his duty and stands to it, and checks to the utmost the encroachments which the duke would make upon the king's power. I doubt the duke means so much to help Wyclif as to rouse the people's sympathy on his behalf against the bishop; but let him beware what he does. The Londoners won't see my lord bishop come to harm."

"The Bishop of Winchester is to be one of the judges, men say—William Wykeham," said Twiford.

"*He's* not to the duke's taste either," added Philpot, somewhat mysteriously; "but I observe he is always careful not to quarrel with him."

"Has the bishop some secret power over him, think you?" said Walworth.

"Nay, I cannot tell," answered Philpot; "but this I know, that Master Wykeham was confessor to the king's late queen, and shrove her on her death-bed, and I have heard from those who should know, that——"

What it was that my master was told, which might so much concern the Duke of Lancaster, did not then appear, for having walked by this time to the bottom of West Cheap, we found ourselves in the crowd of people who were flocking to the church; and just as my master was speaking, the crowd had to make way for a person of consequence, whose servants began pushing and elbowing their way in a manner which called forth many a hard name for them from the citizens.

"Room for my lord of Lancaster—give way there!" shouted the stalwart Englishman who was in command of the advanced part of the *cortège*.

"Let him wait, Master Serving-man, till we let him pass," sang out a London 'prentice. "Who is the duke, that his man should talk so big?"

A blow, or an attempt at one, was the only reply made to this

sally. I say an attempt at one, because the lad ducked before the man's staff could reach him, and rising again like a water-fowl a few yards off, he hit his enemy full in the face with a lump of mud he had picked up from the street. The ludicrous condition of the servant, half blinded with the wet mud which streamed over his face and fine clothes, yet striving to keep up an appearance of dignity in spite of his discomfiture, served to put the people into good humour—which was perhaps as well, for as the Duke of Lancaster, accompanied by Lord Henry Percy, and attended by a small number of knights and gentlemen, rode by, looking sombre and unloving to the commons, men scowled angrily at him, and muttered words about the maletots, and the poll-tax, and the Spanish war, for which they held him responsible.

John of Gaunt had been intended by Nature for one of her finest specimens of humanity. His frame was large and powerful, his limbs were well shaped, his stature inclined to the gigantic, and his head, which was massive, was that of a man of no ordinary metal. His face was of the true Plantagenet type—handsome, but too stern-looking to be strictly pleasing; and there was something about the mouth and lower part of the face which suggested the presence of a spirit not at all times amiable, and capable even, when thwarted, of taking cruel exercise.

Though Nature had been lavish of her bounty to him, he had taken little care to honour her gifts. The restless soul which she had placed in that fair body fretted it, and gave it, as at this time, when it was in its prime, a gaunt and wasted look that marred the beauty of it.

Since his boyish days John of Gaunt (Ghent) had been ceaselessly employed in active service in many places. He had not always been so to his own interest—generally, indeed, he had lost by his labour—but his mind had occupation; and so long as this could be had, it was of small consequence where or in whose interest he had it. He had fought in Spain, in France, in Flanders, and in Scotland; he had travelled; he had gone on embassies; he had taken an active part in English politics; and was that one of King Edward's sons to whom the monarch most resorted for

advice after death had bereft him of his trusted and beloved heir, the Black Prince.

Of late years he had been rapidly growing unpopular. The harsh measures which the old king adopted in the government towards the end of his reign were ascribed to the Duke of Lancaster; his Spanish marriage, and his consequent claim to the crown of Castille—a claim which it was proposed to make good with English blood and treasure—were also displeasing to the people, among whom it was now rumoured, that when King Edward should die, the Duke of Lancaster meant to seize his crown.

His errand on this occasion was not altogether to the liking of the Londoners. They were as yet not so much leavened with the new doctrines preached by Wyclif as to be hearty in supporting them; and though the duke's attachment to Wyclif strengthened his cause mightily, Wyclif's cause did not benefit the duke in the minds of the citizens, though in the provinces it drew many sympathies to him.

Very little would have provoked the people to violence, so much was the duke hated; but he seemed bent on giving no occasion for offence, and rode along on his beautiful roan palfrey without turning his head to right or left, except now and then to acknowledge the salute of some old soldier of his late brother the Black Prince, who had seen him in the battle-field, and knew him for a valiant man-at-arms.

The duke and his company turned to the west at Paul's Cross, and made for the north door of the cathedral. We passed on in the same direction, and, reaching the entrance first, passed into the sacred building. Matins had just been sung in the chapel, and as we entered the last notes of the service were dying away among the high vaults of the noble roof, faintly echoing and re-echoing their own amen.

The Bishops of London and Winchester and many of the clergy were already met in the chapel behind the high altar, and while they are waiting the arrival of Wyclif, it may be as well that I should mention the cause of their assembling.

For twenty years before this time Wyclif had written and

spoken freely against what he considered to be the errors of the clergy and their teaching. He had lifted his voice strongly against the corrupt living of the monks, the employment of clergymen in secular offices, the refusal of the Church authorities to sanction the translation of the Holy Scriptures, the doctrine that in the Eucharist the bread and wine are turned by consecration into the actual body and blood of the Saviour Christ, that the rite of confirmation can be conferred by bishops alone, that matter once created is indestructible, and last but most offensive, that as in the time of the Apostles there existed but the two orders of priests and deacons, so now there were not, nor need there be, any Pope, patriarchs, or archbishops.

From time to time these doctrines and bold sayings had attracted much attention, and this year special notice was taken of them. The Conclusions, or heads of the subjects upon which Wyclif insisted, were drawn up and read before the Pope, who condemned twenty-three of them as idle and heretical, and sent Bulls to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, ordering them to have Wyclif brought before them, and examined closely in reference to the denounced articles. That was how on this February morning the learned prelates and doctors came to meet in St. Paul's Cathedral, which was now crowded in all its parts by the good men of London, anxious to find Wyclif, whom they loved and respected, free from heresy, and equally determined that their bishop should be free from scath and harm.

I was in the rear of our party, well placed inside the Lady Chapel, and from one of the arcades of the choir screen to which I had climbed could see thoroughly all that was going on.

Not many minutes after the Bishop of London had taken his seat, there was a slight stir in the aisle leading up to the chapel, and presently appeared, leaning on a tall white staff, a venerable-looking man, in height above the middle stature, with oval face fining off to the chin from a broad and massive brow. His grey hair and beard flowed in long curls over his simple dress of dark brown stuff, girded in at the waist and falling thence in ample

folds to his feet. He walked with firm and dignified step, a pattern of nobleness and of what is majestic in man. Behind him came a servant with books and paper rolls—copies of the aspersed writings and his own laboured manuscript of the Bible in English. On either side of him walked the two men who of all others the bishop least wished to see. A flush came and went on my Lord Courtney's face as he recognised in these two the Duke of Lancaster and the earl marshal, Lord Henry Percy. A smile played for a moment round the Bishop of Winchester's firm mouth, and then his face gave no more indication of what was passing through his mind than the ocean gives of the secrets in its breast. He thought, perhaps, of what Queen Philippa had told him in her last confession.*

The press of people was now so great that Master Wyclif and his friends could not get through. Lord Percy, using or abusing the authority he had as earl marshal, began to drive the people back and to use force and loud gesture even in the chapel, as though it had been a common place, and as though the bishop had not been there.

My Lord Courtney was a proud man by his blood. He was of the family of the great Earls of Devon, whose ancestors had sat on the throne of Constantine, and were descended from Charlemagne himself. Believe me, he could ill brook this behaviour of the marshal; and rising from his seat, he called him to remember where he was and how he should conduct himself, adding these words:

"My lord, if I had known what masteries you would have kept in the church, I should have stopped you out from coming hither."

Lord Percy being engaged in altercation with some of the

* A story was current amongst "those who knew" that Queen Philippa had confessed to William of Wykeham, on her dying bed, that John of Gaunt was not really her child, but that she had changed her own daughter for the son of a friend. This she charged him to let her husband know before he died. The bishop kept his promise, and so the Duke of Lancaster got to know the secret, not loving the bishop the more therefore. The story was but a *canard* of the time, and quite untrue.

citizens, did not hear what the bishop said to him ; but the Duke of Lancaster heard and answered for him :

“He is earl marshal, and shall exercise his authority whether you will or not.”

Bishop Courtney made no reply to this speech. He remained standing in front of his chair, apparently waiting in calmness the coming of Wyclif ; but the tightly-set teeth, compressed lips, and the increased paleness of his face showed that he was making a strong effort to keep his temper.

He succeeded in his attempt, maintaining a dignified silence, until, a space having been cleared, John Wyclif and his friends stood before him.

Wyclif made a lowly obeisance to his superior, which was acknowledged, and then Bishop Courtney, after resuming his seat, ordered silence to be kept and called upon his proctor to read the Papal Bull under which these proceedings had been instituted.

As of course the attendance of visitors had not been expected, not any accommodation had been prepared for them. There were seats for the Court and for some of those in attendance on it, but none for any others.

Wyclif was infirm, having been lately attacked by the fore-runners of those seizures which afterwards killed him. On this morning he was particularly unwell, and the walk from his lodgings to the church had greatly tired him. He showed signs of distress, and it was perhaps expedient that he should have a seat. But he knew it was not customary on such occasions and in such a presence to be seated, and his pride would not suffer him to ask any indulgence.

The Duke of Lancaster, who, careless of the want of accommodation for himself, was contenting himself with the support he found in leaning against a pillar, noticed Wyclif's weakness, and, scorning to ask a favour of the bishop whose want of courtesy towards himself in the matter of seats he had duly noticed, whispered to Lord Henry Percy, who was standing beside him, that a chair should be brought for their friend.

The earl marshal beckoned to a servant, who fetched a stool

from the sacristy, which was given to Wyclif, with an intimation that he should sit down.

"Not so," said the bishop, interfering; "it is contrary to law and most unreasonable that one should sit down who is cited to appear before his ordinary. He must and shall stand."

"What Lord Percy says is most reasonable," answered the duke: "Wyclif has much to answer, and needs a soft seat. And as for you, my lord bishop, who are so high and proud, I will bring down not only your pride, but the pride of all the bishops in England."

"I am to give orders here, my lord," said the bishop. "And as for your language, give me leave to say it is unbecoming. You might have shown your ill will in more seemly terms. You seem to forget that, our respective dignities apart, I am of as good blood"—here a sardonic smile played about the corner of his mouth—"as my lord of Lancaster."

The duke missed the point of the speech, where it alluded to the false libel about him which I have already noticed, and continued:

"Trust not in your parents, for I promise you they shall profit you little."

"Sir," said the bishop, "my confidence is not in my parents nor in any man else, but only in God, in whom I trust, and by whose assistance I will be bold to speak the truth."

The duke was now thoroughly angered, the more so because he felt that his conduct had been wrong and ungenerous; and, like other men when ridden by passion, he gave himself to unbridled extremes of talk.

"Rather than hear these words from him," said he to Lord Percy, "I'll drag him from the church by the hair of his head."

And these words, being heard by the bystanders, were passed from mouth to mouth until the people too began to show their anger.

Loud and angry cries rang through the building. "Who is he that insults our bishop?" "Down with the nobles!" "Down with the enemies of the commons!" resounded from arch to arch,

and a movement, with the evident design of doing some mischief, was made towards the place where the noblemen stood.

The knights and gentlemen who attended the duke closed round him, and presented a ring, which in that confined space could not be broken. Swords flew out of their scabbards and flashed thirstily in the air; the hubbub and uproar increased in the church, and it seemed impossible to prevent a serious collision, when the bishop rose up, beckoned to the people, and in a voice which was heard above the din and confusion, begged and ordered the multitude to depart peaceably.

Some time elapsed ere the stream of people flowing out of the church gave opportunity to the principal actors to effect their departure.

Bishop Courtney meantime addressed Wyclif, who had remained standing, unquestioned and silent, during all this unseemly riot, like some rock in the midst of a stormy sea that foams and surges round it—told him of the sentence which the Pope had passed upon his *Conclusions*, and commanded him to keep silence upon such topics for the future.

Wyclif essayed to make him some answer, but his voice was drowned in the noise which, within and without the cathedral, the Londoners made in their zeal for their bishop.

John of Gaunt had stood, with folded arms, an unmoved and apparently careless spectator of the scene. There was a scornful look upon his face as he heard the threats of the people. He waited until the hubbub had somewhat abated, and until a messenger whom he had despatched to the Savoy as soon as he had entered the church—seemingly foreboding something unpleasant—had returned with fifty more of his household well armed and appointed.


Under the protection of this guard, he offered his arm to Wyclif, and escorted him into the churchyard. Perhaps Master Wyclif's presence was of more service to the duke than the duke's was to Master Wyclif. The Londoners, seeing their enemy with their friend, desisted from attacking him, and suffered the Duke of Lancaster and his followers to retire unmolested to the Savoy.

CHAPTER II.

HOW THE DUKE OF LANCASTER WENT TO DINE WITH JOHN OF YPRES.

"Of that wassail men told great tale."

ROBERT DE BRUNNE.—*About 1320.*

N Knight Rider Street, in the ward of Vintry, John of Ypres lived in his own handsome house. He was born, as his name implied, at Ypres in Flanders, where his father's family had dwelt for many generations. But when John was yet quite young, his parents had come over to England and established themselves in London, to found a trade in connection with their Flemish friends at Ypres.

They had profited by the services they had many times rendered to the sovereign, and still more by their industry and thrift. Their house in Knight Rider Street was known all London over for the finest linen which the foreign trade had to show, and whoso needed good Flanders cloth knew that he could get it from John of Ypres.

John was a rich man, and would have been given to hospitality had it not been that the Londoners resented his being a foreigner, and held themselves as much as possible aloof from all dealings with him except in the way of trade. His social circle was not, therefore, large, and, with the exception of one or two citizens whose judgment got the better of their prejudices, his society consisted of some of his own countrymen and of the Genoese merchants who lived in Mineheon Lane. To many of the nobility he was as well known and as useful as his father had been. He made heavy loans to them when in difficulties, and his gold it was

that fitted out many a handsome expedition which the soldier or ambassador could not pay for at the time. My lord of Lancaster even, the king's son, thought no scorn to use the Flemish merchant's purse; and it so happened that on the day after the events narrated in the last chapter, he and Lord Percy went to John of Ypres' house to arrange some money difficulty which was inconveniently pressing. John knew of their intention to visit him, and prepared a reception worthy of such guests.

Out of deference to the quality of his visitors, John had postponed his dinner to the hour now customary at court, and the meal was not served till half-past one o'clock. The dining-room was a fair chamber on the first floor, with panels of oak, and heavy beams of the same crossing each other at intervals of three feet along the ceiling, so as to give it the appearance of being vaulted. The length was full twenty feet, and the breadth could not have been less than eighteen. At the far end was a fine open grate, in which a blazing stack of wood was burning cheerily, sending a ruddy glow of warmth and comfort through the room. Two of the three windows which looked on to Thames Street were filled with the painted glass in the manufacture of which the Flemings greatly excelled, and the paintings in them represented the Adoration of the Lamb and the Martyrdom of St. Bavon, the patron saint of Ghent. It was only within the last few years that John had followed the now general custom of using a chimney, and the intrusion of the fireplace into the room, though a substantial comfort, rather blocked up the end of the apartment, which had been built before the birth of the innovation. Round the walls were hung sets of arms and pieces of body armour which a prince might have worn; and where these did not serve to cover the nakedness of the walls some beautiful tapestry from French or Flemish hands, representing the history of St. Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins, was suspended. The floor had been lately scraped and strewn with fresh straw. Nothing had been left undone which might minister to the comfort of the noble visitors.

In this room a sumptuous meal was served after John and the

duke had settled their business matters in the warehouse, and to it sat down my lord of Lancaster, Lord Henry Percy, with two of their favourite knights, and John of Ypres. At the top of the board smoked a noble boar's head, flanked by huge pasties that would have sufficed to feed a score of schoolboys. Large pieces of roasted beef formed a succulent escort to a fine haunch of venison that once had graced, in the form of a noble buck, the forest glades of Windsor; whilst several dainty dishes of special virtue sent up a fragrant steam from the lower end of the table. Massive flagons and smaller tankards, all of purest silver, attested the wealth of the Flemish merchant; and the quality of the wines that were to make glad the heart of the duke and his companions was second to none that London could boast of. All was excellent and in abundance. The host and his guests sat down to as splendid a table-load as could be found anywhere away from the court. The diners were in good spirits and prepared to do full justice to the good cheer. The duke had just commenced operations on a dish of oysters which was before him, and had made some sally *à propos* of their beards, about pulling the "proud bishop" out of his church by *his* priest-cut beard, when a loud knocking at the outer gate of the mansion startled the host out of his dignity, and made him run to the window to ascertain the cause. Two bloodhounds, who were leashed and lying on the rushes before the fire, growled angrily as the knocking was continued, and John of Ypres himself was scarcely less put out when he heard his gate so continuously and impatiently battered.

"By Our Lady!" said the duke, who still applied himself to his oysters, "yon man must have got good St. Vitus's dance, and means to communicate the malady to your knocker."

"Mischief seize him," cried John, "for a breaker of the peace! I've a mind to ply my cudgel on his head to the same tune that he is playing on my gate. But forgive me, your grace, my rough speech; the gentleman who claims admittance has your grace's badge on his arm. What a mischief does Haveland mean by not seeing to the gate? Run, there, some of you. See that the gentleman be admitted, and straightway, too."

Away ran two of the serving-men in obedience to their master's orders, but before they reached the gate, old Haveland the porter had become convinced of the respectability of the applicant, whose haste brooked so little delay, and with many mutterings and words to himself, expressive of his own discontent, had turned the heavy gate upon its hinges to admit the stranger, and then let it swing back again into its sockets.

The courtyard once gained, the stranger ran across it, and reached the entrance-door. There the two men who had been sent to admit him met him in the passage, and he, thinking they meant to stop him, hurled one of them to the other end of the hall, and calling to the other not to hinder him as he loved the duke and his own life, rushed to the apartment above the warehouse, in which the party was dining. Pale and out of breath, he entered the room and advanced to where the duke was.

"What means this haste, Sir Walter Hood?" inquired Lancaster, looking up into his servant's eyes, which were full of apprehension and terror.

"Fly my lord! Fly at once! Stay not for anything! A brutal rabble, set on by those who should know better, have been at the Savoy to seek you. They swear they will have your head, that you are a traitor to the people of England, and that they will not be satisfied till they take your life. They have found out you are not at the Savoy, and from some of the terrified slaves about the place they have an inkling of your being here. As I forced my way through them to get hither, I heard them say they would unearth the traitor wherever he might be hidden; and when I left they had already turned their steps in this direction."

The duke turned pale at the word "traitor," but showed no sign of fear at the danger which threatened him. He conferred a moment with Lord Percy, and then turning with a smile to John of Ypres, who stood apalled at what he heard from Sir Walter Hood, excused himself for so scurvily running away from such good cheer. The merchant began to stammer out some words of regret, but the duke, Lord Percy, and their attendants had quitted the room; and before John well knew that his guests

were gone, they were down by the water-side looking for the means of safety.

The duke, who knew the house, threaded the passages which led to the water-gate, and by the time the bank was reached could hear the roar of the mob sounding hoarse and savage above the rush of the river.

"Fools!" said Lancaster, "do they think to catch me like a fox in its hole? Let them bray and blare to their hearts' content. They cry 'Crucify' me to-day, but to-morrow they shall say 'All hail!'"

A skiff which lay moored hard by where they stood was unloosed. Sir Walter, the other two knights, and Lord Percy seized the oars, and the Duke of Lancaster, wrapped in his long furred robe, sat down in the stern-sheets, and took the tiller.

"Push off!" cried Percy as soon as the party were seated; and in another minute a few vigorous strokes had shot the boat a good twenty yards into the stream. Not a minute had been lost in getting away, and not a minute too soon had the start been made, for just as the rowers were settling to their work in the boat, a yell from the shore announced that the people had discovered the fugitives.

Whiz! whiz! came two arrows hurtling through the air, falling into the boat not a yard from the stroke oar.

"Pull steadily," said the duke, "but do not distress yourselves: we are safe from anything they can do, and we shall want our strength to meet the force of the stream higher up. They shall pay for this insult, by all that's horrible! but for the present we must bide our time."

Again and again the shafts flew through the air, but luckily wide of the mark. The wild shouts of the populace were borne upon the wind and startled the snipe in the marshes of Lambeth; but they had no other effect upon the objects of them than to assure them of what was already known, namely, that it would be the worse for them if they fell into the hands of the rioters.

No pursuit was attempted on the part of the mob, who, baffled in two quests after their enemy, seemed not inclined to push the

matter further. Bishop Courtney, as I heard afterwards, had hurried from his house as soon as the doings of the rioters were made known to him, and coming among the people, had forbidden them, under pain of the Church's displeasure, to follow out their evil intentions. Adam Staple, the mayor, too, had not been idle, and ere the mob at John Ypres' house could succeed in battering down the gate, he was upon them with a large number of the citizens, and drove them away to their homes.

Before this could be done, however, an immense amount of mischief had been committed. The duke's palace of the Savoy had been attacked, and the lower part entered. Pillage, and even murder, had been committed in the assault; and it was only by dint of the most determined resistance that the duke's servants had managed to hold the place at all against the assailants. Baulked there, the people betook themselves to Lord Percy's house in the Marshal's Inn.

Lord Percy they hated because he was earl marshal, and because he had used his authority to favour the duke. He had also proposed to the king that the lord mayor should no longer rule in the city, but that the king should appoint a governor of his own; and he had been chiefly instrumental in procuring the imprisonment of Sir Peter de la Mare, who was much beloved.

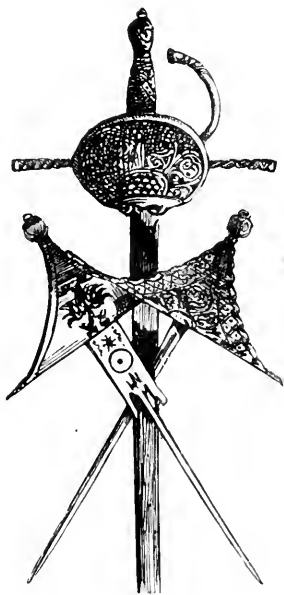
At his house the gates were broken up. The people rushed in and sought everywhere for him; but not finding him, they ransacked the house, destroyed many valuable records appertaining to the earl marshal's office, which they found there, and made a ruin of what had been a comely house.

In one of the rooms they found a priest, of whom they inquired where Lord Percy was hidden; and as he answered them with words bolder than they thought becoming, one of them cried out, "Here is Lord Percy!" upon which others rushed in and killed the poor priest with their knives.

Meanwhile the boat with its noble freight shot swiftly up the river towards Westminster, and, being favoured by the deepening twilight, passed unchallenged till it reached its destination at Lambeth. Near the spot where the king's palace gardens slope

down to the river, the rowers ceased pulling, and running the boat close in under the grassy bank, the duke and Lord Percy stepped out, and walked through the grounds to the manor-house, where the Princess of Wales and the young Prince Richard then lay.

Sir Walter Hood was told to get back if possible to the Savoy, and to report when he should have learned what mischief had been done.



CHAPTER III.

MY FATHER—BROOKLET—MASTER PHILPOT'S HOUSE
NEAR THE GARLAND.

"He was in all his deedis leal;
For him dedecynycit not to deal
With treachery, na with falsët:
His heart on high honoür was set;
And him contentit on sic manère,
That all him loved that were him near."

JOHN BARBOUR.—*About 1390.*



HAVING thus far spoken more of others than myself, and given an inkling of what my position was, I deem it now necessary to give a more exact account of the relation in which I stood to Master Philpot, and how it came about that I lived with him.

My mother was a daughter of the noble house of Estrades, and married my father because she loved him. Her family were adverse to the match, and did all in their power to prevent it. It liked them ill that their blood should mingle with that of a family whose stock was pure Saxon. Their ancestors had been liegemen of the Norman Conqueror, and had done good service for him in the winning game which he played for England. My father's ancestors had also fought at Hastings, although on the other side, and had dealt strong blows against the foreign tyranny wherever blows were to be exchanged. They had followed Hereward to the Camp of Refuge, and adhered to the fortunes of the noble Waltheof so long as he ranged free as the vindicator of his countrymen's rights.

The house of Estrades were mighty, and as "no one disputes the nobility of conquerors," they were taken for the nobles they

claimed to be. After they had once planted themselves in England in the capacity of lords of land, no more was ever heard of how they once tended sheep in the valley of the Seine, nor of the ill condition from which the Norman freebooting expedition had relieved them. They glittered and were counted for gold, and to say truth, they were of right good metal, faithful to the charges intrusted to them, and never skirking or skulking when work was wanted from them. Towards the conquered race, which hated them with deadly hatred, they could not bear themselves otherwise than as conquerors, and their descendants, therefore, did but adopt the family traditions when they resented the marriage of their kinswoman with a *mere Englishman*. It made nothing that, under the Saxon rule, that Englishman's forefathers had been king's Thanes, trusty in council and valiant in war; and that though the family estates and title had gone when all save honour was lost, the family had preserved themselves from the galling chain of fendalism, and had farmed the land my father possessed, without owning the supremacy of any other lord than the king himself.

The property was small, but enough to live on; and when my mother met the owner of it at Rochester Castle on the occasion of some gathering of the landowners of the district, and loved him for his noble person and yet nobler disposition, she thought no scorn to accept his offer to share the living with him. Her family raved and cursed at what they called a degradation, but my father only smiled at their folly, and remembering, though he was too generous to speak of it, the story about the sheep in the valley of the Seine, wrapped himself in the consciousness of right-doing, and took the fair Dame Adeline to be his wedded wife. She died when I was only two years old, so that I have only a very faint recollection of her; but that recollection is sufficient to make me think that the portrait of a pale, dark-haired lady, with Norman features and large black eyes, which was painted by a limner employed in the cathedral to decorate the choir, is a fair representation of her who gave me birth.

The loss of my mother had the effect of knitting me more

closely than perhaps otherwise would have been the case to my dearest-loved father, whose soul may God rest and take into His keeping! He loved me tenderly, and strove by all the means in his power to make amends for the irreparable loss I had incurred. No one could have been kinder or more solicitous for my welfare, and the manliness of his character only served to heighten the contrast which his almost womanly gentleness established. As soon as I was big enough to do so, he made me partaker in all the few enjoyments with which his life was blessed: no sport or game, no sight, no pleasure which admitted of a division, but he shared it with me. We were inseparable, and though by example and precept he ever taught me to act in a manly and generous spirit, he did not scruple, out of the great love he bore me, to check me whenever my natural petulance or churlishness made me act unseemly. His two chief friends, whom he was wont to call the dividers of his sorrows, were the parson of the village next to his estate, and my afterwards dear master and friend, John Philpot, of the city of London, merchant. The former I remember as a man much beloved by all his flock, over whom he had truly a father's authority—one who never spared a rebuke to high or low if he thought it his duty to administer one, and who was ever ready to do a kind action or a friendly service even to the tasking of his own very scanty means. My father once said of him, when talking to Master Philpot, that

“To drawe folk to heven by fairnesse,
By good ensample was his busynesse;”

and this business he endeavoured his utmost to carry out, earning fairly for himself the truthful epitaph which the people put over him when he died, and which ended by saying that

“Christe's lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taught, and first he folwed it himselve.”*

* These two quotations are from Chaucer's fine description of the parson of a town, in the Prologue to the “Canterbury Tales.” The first is adapted by Goldsmith, when describing the parish priest of Auburn, who

“Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.”*

This good man taught me not only the rudiments of our holy religion, but those other mental accomplishments of reading and singing which are so graceful. For writing, he knew nothing of it, though he did not despise those, better informed, who had a knowledge of that art. In doctrine he never touched those points which have been mooted so seriously since good Master Wyclif's time, but he preached and practised love to God and brotherly kindness to all human creatures.

Dumb animals, too, were his care, and many an over-driven horse and toil-worn ox might have counted him among their best friends. The very birds seemed to know him for their guardian, for they did not avoid his coming as they did that of other men.

He was constantly at our house, and was my father's confidant and adviser in everything. The visits which Master Philpot made to Brooklet were few and at long intervals. I have but a faint recollection of his presence until that time when he came, shortly before the date at which this story begins, and then it was for the last time. When he left I left with him, never to return.

The circumstances under which this happened were as follow :—I had noticed for many months that my dear father's health was failing. Although he was not actually ill, he would often complain of feeling tired, and sometimes when we were out on the moors, or in the forest, he would stop suddenly, turn very pale, and say that he felt a weight upon his chest. Before my anxiety could find employment in relieving him he would say that he was quite well again, and, thanking God for the ease he felt, would walk on to our destination. Many a time have I poured my troubles on this head into the patient ear of the good priest, and often and often on my knees did I beg the kind Father in heaven not to take away my dear father on the earth. I loved him too much to part with him, and the bare notion of losing him filled me with great unhappiness.

Sometimes I thought he seemed desirous to follow my mother, whom he loved tenderly, to the place whither she had gone ; and then again I knew his passing love for me, and that he would cling to hope of life, for my sake, as long as he could. Once as I

watched him sleeping in his chair, and thought of all he was to me, and how good and noble he was, he awoke suddenly, and caught me gazing.

Whether he had been dreaming of what was coming, or whether he read on my face the thoughts which were passing through my mind, I know not, but he said as he roused himself from slumber, and put his hand on my head, as his habit was when talking seriously to me—

“The time will soon be that I shall have to leave you, my boy ; and as my summons, when it comes, will brook no dilatory answer, it may be I shall have to quit you with scant leave-taking. There are a few words I should like to say to you whilst I have power to say them.

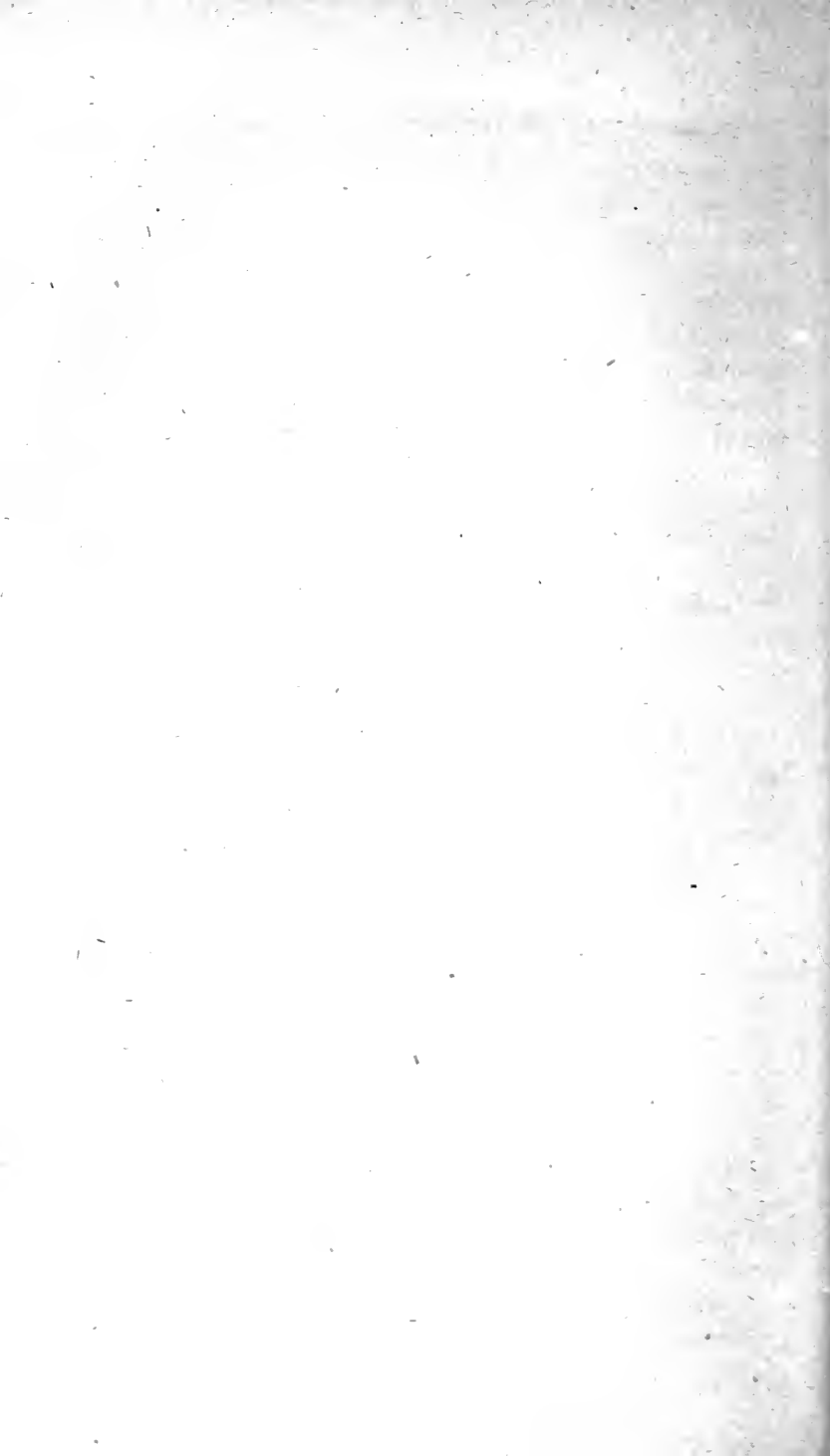
“First of all, I may as well tell you, you will not remain here after my death: the estate will not support you. It came to me with heavy debts upon it, and, notwithstanding all my thrift, I have been unable to get rid of them. You must make your way in the world as others are making theirs ; and there is no reason on earth, Hubert, why you should not do so, whilst you keep faithful to the principles in which you have been brought up. Hate deceit, my boy, and all the vices of the Normans ; be true to yourself ; never wantonly give cause of offence, yet hold your own when others offend you.

“You do not remember your mother, lad,” he continued, after a short interval of painful breathing, “and the worse for you ; you have lacked the precious benefits which her care would have brought to you. But you will be able to remember me, I trust ; and sometimes when your thoughts shall be inclined to run backwards, think of me, Hubert, as of a father who loved his boy dearly, and whose great comfort in dying was to know that if such matters can pass beyond the grave, he would see his son doing things worthy of himself, and worthy of the noble Saxon thanes whose blood flows pure and fresh about his heart.

“There are troubles coming on this country, Hubert—troubles which it may be difficult for the lords to stem. Already there is a talk among the people against the power of their superiors.



THE LAST HOURS OF HUBERT'S FATHER.



They ask what difference is there between one of themselves and a *gentleman*. The question is a natural one, and will possibly be some day asked in the same fashion as it was asked by the French peasants of their masters after the capture of King John at Poitiers. The people do not see any difference, except in the power to do harm, between themselves and most of their lords; there are few who have the gentle ways—and by gentle I do not mean womanish—which alone make the gentleman. They are, for the most part, selfish, cruel, greedy, and overbearing; they do not show by their acts that there is any real reason why *they* should command, and the others obey; and so long as that is so, the question will assuredly be put to them, and woe betide them if they have to answer it at the sword's point.

“What part you may play in these troubles if they come I cannot now foresee, but you will remember that your forefathers were ever on the side of liberty—liberty and order together. It would be strange if my son should be found fighting on the side of feudal oppression, and still more strange if he were in the army of that liberty which is nothing but confusion. True leaders of the people will be wanted, not mere applause-seekers—men who will disinterestedly bring the folk to that which is best for them, without respect to the antiquity or the newness of rights. Let your calm judgment be your guide, and pray that it may be enlightened to form a just decision. Be true, just, courageous, and unselfish, and you may do your country service, and win honour to yourself. There will be no sufficient reason, if you abide by these things, why you should not command and guide the people as well as my lord of Lancaster himself—an honourable ambition, my boy, so you pursue it rightly.”

This and much more to the same effect did the dear old man say to me, explaining the significance of the gentle life, and the manner in which a Christian man should live. It is many years now since the words were spoken, and I am declining, as the speaker then was, in the vale of years; yet the impression they made is as fresh as ever, and the feelings they called up in me as green now as then.

They were the legacy my dear father bequeathed to me, and great have been the blessings which have flowed from them. Throughout the years which followed, when hesitation or poor spirit has made me pause in the attempt to do something supposed to be beyond my power, the remembrance of that evening at Brooklet has flashed across my mind, and as I brought my intention to the test of that standard which he set up for me—"Be true, just, courageous, and unselfish"—I have felt my meanness vanish as at a magician's touch. Thus it is that in civil life, in the field, at sea, on land, in the battle of life, and in the cause of my country, I have taken my small share, and am enabled to say now in my old age, not for my own glorification, but for the instruction of others, that I have striven not without honour. My dear father's example and teaching, and my love for him, have made me do these things.

Soon after the evening on which these words were spoken, that happened of which even now I cannot bring myself to write at length. My father sank and died. His friend and mine, Master John Philpot, had been intrusted with the care of his temporal affairs. He himself lies in the sweet "acre of God" at Rochester.

Brooklet was sold; the debts upon it were paid; and, after all to whom aught was owing had been satisfied, there remained a small sum of money, which Master Philpot took in charge for my benefit. I came with the good man to his house in London, and there I was at the time this story opens.

The house itself was a large one near the centre of the city, being not more than two hundred yards from London Stone, which stands in the middle of it. The garden, which was large and well stocked with trees, ran down as far as the gardens of the Garland Brewery in East Cheap; Fenchurch stood to the north, and Gracious Street to the west, while to the south lay the Thames, into which Langbourne stream, which rises in Fenchurch Street, ran in many rivulets through Lombard Street and Shearers Lane. The house was not new, and had not as yet many of the improvements which others in the neighbourhood enjoyed. Thus the rooms in the upper story were without chimneys, and

had not any glazed windows. They were, moreover, small, not being able to compare with those of Master Walworth, in Candlewick Street, which measured at least nine feet on the square; or with those of Sir Nicholas Brembre, in Lime Street, some of which were eleven feet on a side. The house formed a quadrangle, of which three sides only were inhabited, the fourth, which faced the street, being nothing more than a thick wall, pierced for the entrance-gates, and having two or three minor openings leading to the offices, which lay on the west side. The courtyard was ornamented in the middle by a carved stone seat, to which were attached large iron rings, used in tying up visitors' horses; and here and there in the yard were small plots of ground which the industry of old Peter, the gardener, strove to keep gay with flowers, despite the exertions of dogs and poultry in a contrary direction. Opposite the great gates was the entrance-door, reached by a flight of stone steps, and opening into a spacious hall. The hall was lighted by four large windows, and hung with weapons, specimens of outlandish things from beyond the sea, and, in the parts from which passages led into the interior, with handsome tapestry. From one side of the hall a door led to the large dining-room, called, on account of the subject depicted on the hangings, the Magna Charta room; on the west side were doors communicating with the offices and stables; while the third side looked into the gardens which ran down as far as the Garland. From the hall a winding stair led to the apartments above. Joined into, but not included in the original design of the house, was the large warehouse in which Master Philpot's merchandise was stored.

For the owner of this house imagine a man of forty-five years of age, in height about five feet ten inches, broad chested, and with a large head; his hair of dark brown, streaked here and there with grey, a fine beard reaching down to his chest, high and broad forehead, hazel eyes, a straight nose, and a somewhat large mouth. His customary dress was simple and rich, consisting of a black doublet under a gown of plum-coloured cloth, which fell to half-way down the leg, for Master Philpot never could be induced to adopt the new fashion brought in by the French friends of King

Richard, of wearing a scant coat cut short at the hips. His hose were of cloth of like colour to the gown, and his nether legs were protected by leather socks or buskins. He invariably wore rounded shoes, disdaining as frivolous the pointed form which came afterwards into vogue. Round his neck he carried a massive gold chain, on which were hung the keys of the house, and at his side he wore a straight sword hanging loosely from a leathern belt inside his gown. His manner was dignified and his temper equal, his voice full and rich, and his speech deliberate. No one ever met with discourtesy from him, and the roughest-tongued was moved to speak discreetly in his presence. Like my own dear father, he had lost his wife soon after the birth of his only child, Alice, on whom he centred all his affections and hopes, and who, being every way worthy of his love, returned him ample measure for all he gave. She was, at the time I came to live there, but twelve years old, but was, as I remember, even then mistress of the household. Every one strove to please her and to minister to her comfort; all loved the fair-haired, blue-eyed Saxon maiden, whose merry laugh and cheerful song made the house a pleasant place, even on saddest days and in most troublous times. The first day I was there she got me into her service, made me bring pots of water for the thirsty flowers in her garden, and rewarded me by taking me to see her tame peacock, which Philip Aubert, her father's oldest shipmaster, had brought her from Bordeaux, and which she called Prince Richard, after the Black Prince's son, who was born there.

Dame Margaret, an old servant of the family, acted as house-keeper, and took charge of Alice. Then, besides the women of the household, who were five in number, there were living on the premises the men who had charge of the merchandise in the shed, the ostler and his lads, and old Peter Wall, the gardener; so that in all we were a goodly company. These were the members of the family with which I came to live after my dear father entered into his rest.

CHAPTER IV.

A SUPPER PARTY AT MASTER PHILPOT'S.

"Thei cry, 'Fyl the bowles!
Bonus est liquor, hic maneamus;
For alle crystone sowllys,
Dum durant vasa, bibamus!'"

Political Song on the Times.



WO days after the events narrated in the second chapter—that is, the day after the Duke of Lancaster had dined with John of Ypres—there was a gathering at our house of some of the principal citizens to supper. My master was desirous of showing hospitality to Master John Wyclif, and to revive a friendship which the latter's long absence at Oxford and elsewhere had compelled to remain without sign of existence for several years. As younger men the two had been warm friends; they had studied, played, and of course fought together as boys; and it was only because duty in after life led them in two different directions that the communion had been broken. The friendship formed years ago had not died but slumbered, and now that Wyclif was the foremost man

in a conflict where every assistance which sympathy or kindliness could give was sorely needed, his old friend gladly seized the occasion both to revive the friendship and to give what countenance he could to him who wanted it.

It had been thought desirable, by means of some demonstration of sympathy, to strengthen the hands of Wyclif, and to show at the same time both that the prosecution by the Church was unpopular, and that it was not in the duke's power that Wyclif really had to trust for protection.

Master Philpot, as the old friend of the Reformer, claimed the privilege of being the medium through which this demonstration should be made. *His* house, no other, must be that at which any gathering must take place; *his* must be the hospitality which was to be extended to all who desired to testify their sympathy with John Wyclif.

The claim thus put forward was allowed, and then came discussions as to the form in which the demonstration should be made. Some proposed a special service in some church where Wyclif might address his supporters; others thought that a dinner in some public place would be the "eftest way;" and various other proposals were made to which objections were raised, so that it was finally left to Master Philpot to decide in what manner he would most like to entertain his friend, the objects of the citizens generally being kept in view.

Master Philpot chose a supper party as being more convenient to the citizens, who were for the most part engaged during the day; the church service plan he opposed as making Wyclif an actor in the scene where it was most desirable he should be perfectly passive, and the decision of Philpot met the general approval.

In order to make the gathering as important as possible, it was resolved, seeing that the supper party was sure to be talked about, to invite as many of the chief citizens as might be to meet him whom the Church folk styled "damnable heresiarch" and "favourer of evil things," but whom the people looked upon as the preacher of freedom. Care was to be taken that these citizens

should be men who entertained the greatest dislike to the Duke of Lancaster.

There were therefore at supper Master Adam Staple, lord mayor; John Barnes, who had been mayor five years before; John Northampton and Robert Laund, the sheriffs; William Walworth and Nicholas Twiford, aldermen; Richard Lions, the lapidary, of Dowgate; William Cosins, and many more whose names have passed out of my memory. Sir Nicholas Brembre, the courtly citizen, whose great wealth, misgotten, was never used but to the people's hurt, was the only man at the table that evening who did not sympathise with the principal guest in his trouble. He had been bidden because of his high position, and because it was hoped he might become reconciled to the noble man whom all the others honoured.

The day had been a busy one for the household. Dame Margaret had been up since long before dawn, ordering, arranging, scolding, cooking, bringing out the rarely-used and costly dishes, which never appeared but on the grandest occasions. Ralph the stableman had tired out two horses, and himself into the bargain, carrying and fetching at the orders of the stern housekeeper, who spared no one, and least of all herself, when the honour of the house for hospitality had to be kept up. The ample kitchen had been found too small to hold the army of good things which her bounty had provided, and she had invaded the room which old Peter, who served as butler as well as gardener, counted as specially his own. This brought about a sharp and long-contested dispute as to their several jurisdictions, in the course of which Margaret gave Peter, and all else whom it might concern, a detailed account of her thirty years' service in the family of Philpot, and an accurate description of all the grand occasions on which the large salvers and the great two-handed drinking-bowls had been used.

Peter, equally garrulous by inclination, was silenced by the ceaseless stream of shrill eloquence which flowed from Dame Margaret's lips; and when he saw the rigour with which his opponent enforced her commands to the servants of lower degree

—for while she was lecturing him she was bustling about her business and administering smart raps with her knuckles to all who were not doing the same about theirs—he gave up the disputed point in sheer desperation, and with much muttering and mumbling to himself about the length of a woman's tongue, which he likened, as other rude people have done, to the clapper of a bell, he set himself to work to bring forth from the cellar, over which he presided, such liquors as he thought befitted the occasion.

His notions of entertainment were as princely as those of Margaret, and to see the rows of flasks and stone wine-jars which he ranged in his pantry and on the side tressels in the supper-room, you might have supposed the whole garrison of Calais or the half of Sir Hugh Calverly's fleet were coming to sup with my master.

Little Peter Wall, an urchin of seven years old, who scarcely passed a week of his life without at least two tastes of the large birch-broom which hung in his father's bed-room, had this morning made himself especially famous. Once he had been detected in the very act of making holes with a rolling-pin in the top of a venison pasty ; and having been put to flight by a stout-armed wench, who brought her hand to bear upon his head before he was aware that he was noticed, he was found within the next few minutes ladling the cream out of a toothsome dish to the preparation of which Dame Margaret herself had devoted a full hour. The treatment he then received put him out of conceit of the kitchen, and, still smarting from the chastisement his curiosity had brought upon him, he crept away to where his father was brewing wonderful compounds to delight the palates of his master's guests that night.

The father scarcely noticed the entrance of his dutiful son, so absorbed was he in the great work he had in hand, but seeing him presently, bade him keep quiet, and on no account to venture near the table where he was. Both these orders Peter the small obeyed but too well. A flask of excellent canary stood in the corner, whither the young man retired, and, as was natural

enough, Peter soon began to take notice of his mute companion. He looked at the top, and then at the sides, and then at the two great handles, shaped like lion's heads, which stuck out of them; and, having satisfied himself about the outside, he resolved to make acquaintance with the inside; so, in the spirit of inquiry, he withdrew the bung from the mouth of the flask, and, as his eyes would not serve his purpose of discovery, he began to sniff the fragrant air which came out of the jar. Finally he fell back upon his sense of taste, and, putting his lips to those of the jar, took a long draught of the contents. How much he took he could never say; but this much is certain, that, when old Peter Wall had finished his labours, and was surveying the results with a satisfaction peculiar to himself, he became suddenly aware of the presence of his hopeful son, who lay stretched at length on the pantry floor, his chubby arms embracing the serpent which had bitten him, and snoring the snore of one in heaviest sleep. No amount of shaking served to arouse him—even Dame Margaret's tongue would have failed to make impression on his drowsy senses, so he was put to bed until the sleepy fit had passed away, when he awoke to a bad headache and a worse whipping.

By eight o'clock all was ready for the guests, who had come in by driblets as soon as their respective occupations allowed them; and ere the curfew had rung out, the company sat down to supper in the Magna Charta room. The long board bent under the weight of food and plate with which it was loaded, and seemed to entreat the hunger of the supper-eaters to relieve it of a portion of its burden. Pies, joints, fish, game, fruits, and all sorts of dainties were there. Dame Margaret's own dish of "blank-manger" stood in a raised mass of pastry made to represent the Tower of London; bowls of mortreux stood imposingly around it, like warders to the fortress; while partridges, capons, bream, luce, marrow-bones, and curiously-prepared oysters, formed guards of honour to the more substantial dishes which held the spiced boar's head and the noble specimens of English beef.

Master Philpot sat at the head of the table, with John Wyclif on his right hand, and Adam Staple, the lord mayor, on his left.

Then came Sir Nicholas Brembre, Master Walworth, and the others in their order, making indeed a goodly company. My place was at the right hand behind my master, where I stood to attend to his wants and to take his messages to the seated guests.

Wyclif was dressed in the same habit I have already described. He ate little and drank less, seeming more to enjoy the kindness which had bidden him be there, than the good things which were served in his honour. Sir Nicholas Brembre, a tall man of swarthy countenance, deep-set black eyes, black hair, and fine, strongly-marked features, was the most richly dressed of all the company. His doublet was of crimson velvet, embroidered with fine gold thread, half covered by a coat of rich blue cloth, cut short at the hips, and with wide sleeves reaching to just below the elbow, the forearm being covered with sleeves of finest lace, bound up at the wrist. Attached to a chain round his neck was a handsome Christopher, which fastened the two top ends of his coat, and from that the chain was continued to the handle of a beautiful Damascus dagger which was thrust into his belt. He wore a handsome sword, the hilt of which sparkled with stones, and which none knew better than he how to handle. His breeches were continuous to the ankle, and were of the finest white kersey, and he wore long-pointed shoes of new scarlet leather. I remember him well, and am thus particular to describe him because I afterwards saw him under other circumstances and in far different sort of clothing, concerning which we shall know more by-and-by. He spoke little, but seemed to observe everything, and more than once I saw him smile, as to himself, when the conversation brought out some topic on which he heard small commends to the party to which he belonged.

Full justice having been done to the supper, the talk became free and lively.

“What thought you, Master Wyclif, of your position the other day, when sword and gown seemed about to fight over your head?” asked John Barnes, who was sitting a few seats away from Wyclif.

"It was the strangest position I have been in," answered he. "I had almost reason to ask for deliverance from my friends. They prevented what I had long wished for—an occasion of speaking before the heads of our Holy Church.

"But that speech might have cost you dear," said Walworth, "for I hear the clergy and the government too are specially angered at what you advance."

"That I cannot help," answered Wyclif, "and, for the issue, God will protect me whilst I am doing His work. I do not fear man so much as God, and the truth I must and will speak when He bids me speak it. Long ago, when I was sick and like to die, God's voice told me I should not die, but live to confound the tricks and wickedness of the friars. All gave me up for a dying man, but I revived, and I shall yet live to do my work."

"God speed you in it, Master Wyclif!" said Laund, "for the impudency of those friars has grown beyond our bearing. They be the very pests of Christendom, and I think neighbour Lofken said right but now when he said that caitiff Cain was the founder of them."

"Nay, I know not that," added Wyclif with a smile; "but this I know, that they are idle, worthless men, who preach but practise not; who sell holy things for money, and live in splendid buildings; who shut up God's Word from the ken of the people, and cheat them with impostures most shameful to think on; that they, desiring power for themselves, cry up the omnipotence of that arch-friar the Pope, who favours and maintains them in all their malpractices. They cannot show reason and Holy Writ for their worship. They sell God's mass for a penny, and so set that price upon His body, wherein, to my mind, are they thirty times worse than Judas, who demanded thirty times that sum as the price of his Lord. Hath not Christ, in His Gospel, told us that His yoke is soft and His burthen light? What need we, then, of friars, by their rules to make this yoke heavy and grievous to be borne? These men do also slight the laws, claiming to be free from the just reward of their offences. They are without the virtues in which they say they follow Christ—obedience, chastity,

and poverty. As to chastity of body, they break it continually, and they have no chastity of soul, for they forsake Christ, their spouse, and are become apostates from His Church. In respect to true poverty, they are the most covetous men in the world; for, what with simony and with begging, and with selling absolutions, they plunder both great and small. But the time shall come when Josiah shall reign, and make an end of such fiends, and restore Christ's rule."

This unexpected burst from the venerable doctor was received at first with silence. Men had not been accustomed to hear such language spoken of such men, and they marvelled at the bold declaration of the Reformer.

"It would be well," said Sir Nicholas Brembre presently, "if those who can stir up the people had the power or the will to quell them again. My lord of Lancaster has little cause to thank the inciters of the people on Wednesday that he escaped with his life, and the Savoy can testify to their fury on his property."

"You say well, Sir Nicholas," said my master, "but think me not discourteous if I say your remark is ill-timed. Your words seemed to point at Master Wyclif as the uproar-maker, whereas you must know that the duke himself and Lord Percy were alone to blame for all the harm which came to them. It would indeed be well if *they* had the power to allay the storm they were so careless about raising."

"Possibly they *have* the power," answered Brembre drily, whilst a sinister smile played about his mouth, as if he knew more than he meant to say about the power. "I meant no offence to Master Wyclif there, nor to any of my good neighbours, and I entreat your pardon for having spoken as I did. St. Julian forbid I should mar the harmony of a feast by aught that was ill-natured! I pray you let me drink to the health of the commons of England and to free speech throughout the land — a toast you cannot refuse to drink."

Permission was, of course, immediately granted, and, though the company thought it strange to hear such words from Sir

Nicholas Brembre's mouth, the toast was drunk with enthusiasm in some of Master Philpot's very best wine ; and, after an interchange of kind words and good wishes, the guests separated to go their several ways.

It was not long before Sir Nicholas's words that the Duke of Lancaster had power to quell the people he had enraged were extraordinarily verified.

The Princess of Wales, widow of the Black Prince, anxious to mend matters between her brother-in-law and the citizens, had tried through the medium of Sir Simon Burley, Sir Lewis Clifford, and Sir Albert de Vere, to induce the citizens to apologise for the insult which the people had offered to the duke and his friend. But her attempts were vain. A courteous answer was brought to her to the effect that the citizens would do all they could to comply with her wishes ; but that the duke could not appear differently in their sight till he should have released Sir Peter de la Mare, who had been imprisoned for freely speaking his mind ; and that they knew his designs to be those of a traitor.

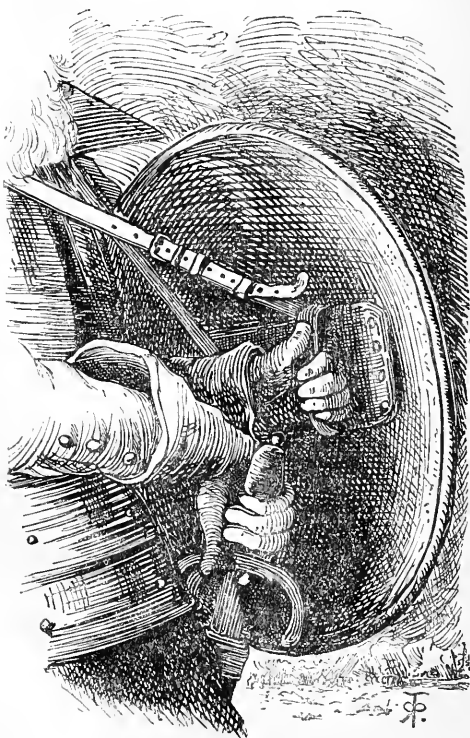
In order to justify themselves to the king, a deputation of the citizens, headed by my master, John Philpot, contrived to get an audience of his Majesty, in spite of the efforts of the duke to prevent them ; and there, in moderate but firm words, declared the grievances under which they laboured, declaring at the same time, what was perfectly true, that his Majesty had not in his kingdom more loyal and obedient subjects than in the city of London.

The king, who was in feeble health, gave them a fair answer ; said he knew their faithfulness and valued it highly ; and that for their liberties, they should rather be augmented than diminished. But he desired they should make some reparation to his son for the injury they had done him, and that there should be an honest friendship between them.

Master Philpot, on behalf of his fellows, said that they were ready to do all in their power to satisfy the duke, and that they would try to punish those who had offended him, but that they themselves had not conspired against him, nor said nor done any-

thing of which he could complain ; and therefore they prayed they might not be punished for the folly of the common people, whose rage they were unable to restrain.

The deputation withdrew, promising to give the Duke of Lancaster satisfaction ; but the only satisfaction the duke would have was the displacement of the principal officers of the city ; so that Adam Staple, who was mayor of London, and Masters Laund and Northampton, who were the sheriffs, were dismissed by royal order from their places ; and Sir Nicholas Brembre, the friend of my lord of Lancaster and the avowed enemy of the citizens, was chosen by the court influence to be the new lord mayor.



CHAPTER V.

OSWALD BARNES BECOMES MY GOOD FRIEND.

“And he down to the yird can gae
All flatlings, for him failit nicht.
This was the first straik of the licht,
That was performit doughtily.”

JOHN BARBOUR.



WAS far from being an idler in the house where I was living. My own disposition made me hate idleness, and Master Philpot was not the man to encourage it. Within a few days after my removal from dear old Brooklet, with its quiet nooks and shining fields, its pleasant trout stream, its thickets, and all the glory of the country, I was set to work in a new groove in London, and ere long time had elapsed ran smoothly in it. No longer did I order the day's work for the farm villeins, see that the cows were milked, the cattle fed, the stables swept; no longer did I make sure that the butter was fairly packed, and see it sent off under safe keeping with the eggs and chickens to Rochester market; no longer mine to announce the day's dawn to the noble horses who carried us, to examine them, have them groomed and curried, or, as often it was my pleasure to do, curry them down with my own hands. I loved the horses above any other animals on the estate, and of all the number—for we had ten—I loved Carrow best. She was my own mare. My father had given her to me at her birth, and I had watched her grow up to filly's estate, forming hopes and expectations which were fully justified by the event when I came to back her and break her for use.

She was a beautiful bit of horseflesh. There was not any place

in the country for thirty miles round which she could not take at the end of her fourth year, and she was able to keep up with the best horses in the field when I rode her, as I did whenever I possibly could, after the fox or stag hounds which hunted the district. No other hands than mine were allowed to touch her; she knew my voice, and knew my step; and, though she certainly had not the power of speech, I could read all she would have said in her large and flashing bright eyes. Now that I was removed to London, Carrow and I were not separated. By the kindness of my master, who knew my affection for the creature, Carrow was allowed a place in his stable. Daily I tended her as before, and from my hands she received her food. I mention Carrow thus particularly because I shall have to say more about her as the story goes on. Besides, it is pleasant to remember old friends, though they be dumb creatures, and my mare and I had a long acquaintance.

She was my first care after I rose in the morning. Her wants supplied, I removed the straw on which I had slept, folded away the blanket, and went to the yard, and got a wash in the clothes-bowl. By the time the household was fully awake I was ready to attend upon my master. He rose at six o'clock, and by seven we were generally together, he to give instructions, I to receive them, about what was to be done that day. It was my duty to go between Master Philpot and the masters of his vessels, to procure the necessary stores and sails, and the ropes and sweeps that the ships required. On me devolved the duty of attending to the receipt of cargoes, and seeing that the ship brought what my master was charged with. If the sea-water had got in and damaged the merchandise, it was for me to ascertain the amount of loss suffered. Besides this, it was my part to go among the merchants who congregated in St. Paul's, and who also met, now at John Simonds's in West Cheap, now at the Mart Hall in Mincheon Lane, near Blanch Appleton, and to gather from what I might there learn the probable wants of the merchants, and the prices they were willing to give.

Sometimes I was sent on journeys as far as St. Alban's, Col-

chester, Gravesend, with messages to citizens living in those towns, and with whom Master Philpot had commerce. It became a rule with me never to be backward when occasion required my services, and Master Philpot soon got to know that if he wanted any special service done he could reckon upon me for the doing of it. He knew how I had been brought up, with what ideas of duty, and how that duty should be done to the uttermost; and I knew not only what my dear father had taught me by his own example, but what he had also exhorted me to do with his dying words; and his command to be mindful of myself last made me often do that which, but for his precept, I might have been inclined to look on as hard. Close sticking to the observance of this rule, constant readiness to do what lawful authority required of me, and the endeavour to do thoroughly whatsoever my hand found to do, earned for me a respect which I did not seek while attaining to it; and the knowledge which soon spread abroad that no one could safely impose upon me, procured for me an exemption from many annoyances to which I might otherwise have been subject.

Once, as I remember, an attempt was made to impose upon this ready submission, which my sense of duty made me show to those to whom obedience was due. It was made once, but never repeated. He who made the attempt became afterwards my very firm friend, and my companion in many a stirring adventure. Oswald Barnes, son to the John Barnes who, in 1371, was lord mayor, and who was mentioned in the last chapter as being present when Master John Wyclif came to supper at our house, was he who attempted the imposition. He was bound apprentice to Master Philpot, and lived in his house with his rest of us. He had been there a few months before the time when I came to London, and then the duty he had hitherto discharged fell to my lot. After my arrival, Master Philpot, really, as I believe, thinking him to be an expert in that branch of the trade, directed him to instruct me in the discharging of it, and set him to minding the goods at the house. Now, Oswald had a particular liking for the charge which he was called upon to resign, and, moreover, felt himself aggrieved that he should be moved from what was in truth a pleasanter duty

than that—albeit of more responsibility—to which he was now set. He took no pains to conceal his disgust; and on the one occasion already alluded to he said that which I could not hear unangered.

I had no motive but obedience to my master's orders for doing whatever I was set about, and when one day Oswald said to me in answer to a remark of mine about the urgency of some business which I had in hand, that "*favourites*, of course, must needs be over-officious," I fired up at the speech, and asked him what he meant by it. I felt that it was an unfair thing for him to say, that it was not true, and that it was an insult; and my young blood, hotter than it is now, and more prone to imagine as well as to resent an injury, roused at the imputation which was cast upon me. High—or, perhaps let me say, foolish—words passed between us, and it was agreed to appeal to the arbitrament of the fist when occasion should serve us. I think, now that I am writing of it, that we showed our wisdom in not fighting on the spot; a few hours' interval allowed time for a friendly settlement, if either of us had chosen to make any advances, and although on this occasion no advance was made, the principle on which we deferred the combat was a thoroughly sound one, and one that, more generally adopted, might lead to the prevention of much mischief.

After the work of the day was over, we repaired to Tassel Close, in Bishopsgate, where our compeers were wont to meet for shooting at the popinjay; and there, with seconds and umpire like any knights of the kingdom, we settled our difference by an appeal to force.

Hugh Aldrich was my second, and Oswald was supported by Alfred Bell. The umpire was Gilbert Marrow, who had presided at similar disputes on many an occasion.

I remember, even at this distance of time, the feelings with which I took my place opposite to Oswald Barnes. I had from the first moment that I saw him taken a great liking to him. I had, on this very account, forbore to notice many little things which in themselves were not pleasant, and even now, when what I fancied concerned my honour brought me face to face with him,

to prove upon him my sense of his wrong, I could not help feeling a strong love for the fellow, and an unwillingness to damage his fine handsome face. But that fever in the blood which has led many to disaster, made us dead to the better feelings which both of us possessed, and in a minute from the time when our seconds arranged us we were hammering at each other's features as if we hated them most direfully.

I was tall for my age—that is, I was five feet six inches in height—and had some advantage over my opponent in point of hitting. He was two inches shorter, but broad chested, and had arms that could have swung a sledge-hammer. My muscles were by no means despicable, and the combat was carried on with an energy which bid fair to do harm to somebody, until a lucky blow of mine, though really delivered more through blind accident than skill, caught poor Oswald just behind the ear. He staggered and bent forward; an expression flitted across his manly face which made me heartily ashamed of being the cause of his mishap, and he fell fainting into the arms of Alfred Bell.

I too was nearly exhausted by the severity of the encounter, and owed my victory—such as it was—rather to the chance hit I had made than to any real superiority over my adversary.

A cup of strong ale, and a refreshing dip in the pail of cold water from the pump in The Close, served to revive me, and in ten minutes I was able to attend upon my recent foe. He had been well soused with cold water, and some strong cordial had been got down his throat. By the time I was beside him he had revived, and the first words he said on coming to were addressed to me.

“Hubert,” he said, “forgive me; I did you wrong in saying what I did, and you have punished me as I deserved.”

“The fault was mine,” I answered, seizing hold of his hand. “I should not have resented so savagely the few words you spoke. Forgive me too, Oswald, for I need to ask pardon far more than you do.”

And so, with mutual confessions of having acted harshly towards each other, and with far stronger feelings of mutual respect than we had had before, we shook hands with hearty good will,

and walked home, our faces bearing unmistakeable marks of the late encounter. But we were a pair of the best friends in the whole of England.

The friendship begun on that day has matured by continuance through many years, and though at the time the incidents attending its formation were exceedingly unpleasant—I refer to the cut which disfigured my face over the right eye, and to the painful swelling which troubled poor Oswald's jaw for a whole se'nnight, and to the real or feigned anger of Master Philpot at our quarrelling—yet in spite of all these, I never could regret the occasion which led me to challenge my fellow-servant, and which took Oswald Barnes and me to settle our differences on the pretty greensward in Tassel Close.



CHAPTER VI.

THE GAMES IN SMITHFIELD, AND HOW SIR WALTER HOOD PUT AN END TO THEM.

' In wrestling nimble, and in running swift,
In shooting steady, and in swimming strong;
Well made to strike, to leap, to throw, to lift,
And all the sports that shepherds are among."

Spenser's Faerie Queene.



It was a matter of importance for me that the marks on my face should disappear as quickly as possible, for in a week's time from the date of the fight there were to be grand matches at shooting with the long-bow and arc, assaults at the pel, running at the quintain, shove-groat and shuffleboard, and boat-tilting on the Thames, at which I wished to strive for prizes. By the kindness of old Margaret, whose skill in surgery was nearly as great as her reputation for it, I managed to get rid of the ugly bruise; not, however, without having to endure by way of payment a set of long lectures upon the folly and wickedness of fighting, and upon the duty of keeping all my blows for the heads of Flemings, Frenchmen, and Spaniards, and such-like outlandish folk. Oswald, too, was taken in hand, and though the lump on his jaw seemed at first unwilling to yield to the art of the surgeon, he was in a condition when the holiday came to take his part in the sports.

We were up in good time on the trial day, tricking ourselves out in the best apparel we possessed, and trying over again for the fiftieth time the instruments we intended to use in the contest.

"Do you feel safe for the popinjay, Hubert?" said Oswald as

he furbished up the handle of his crossbow, already as bright as oil and leather could make it.

"I doubt I shall try for it," I answered: "I want to keep my arm steady for the sword-play, and not to tire before the quintain time, for I am bent on trying to win the prize there."

"Why there particularly?" replied Oswald. "I would rather be best at the popinjay and the sword-play than hit all the Saracens' heads in Smithfield."

"That may be," said I, "but the first and last time I ran at the quintain was when Will Allein carried off the prize. I was ill mounted then on John Roffe's little pony that did not understand the thing, and I being a young hand, between us we made a regular mess of it. I struck the quintain, but did not avoid the bag; and as I was recovering from the blow it gave me I heard Will Allein say something about a country clown not being allowed to meddle with such things, and I mean to show him that a bantam must not crow too loudly even on his own dunghill."

"Quite right, lad; go in and win. It'll do Master Will a world of good to have some of that conceit of his taken out of him, and I hope you'll do that service for him to-day."

"I mean to try," said I, "and with Carrow to help me I am not unhopeful about the result."

I had just taken up my spurs, which shone like mirrors, and was about to buckle them on, when a gentle tap came at the door, and Alice entered the room with a new pair of leather gauntlets which she had been making for me with her own hands for weeks past.

"There," she said, "now you will be able to look like a gentleman, without big holes in your gloves, and all proper and clean. I hope you'll be lucky to-day."

"Thank you, Alice," I said; "it is very kind of you to say so, and still more kind of you to take so much trouble for me. I think I must wear one of these pretty gloves in my cap, and, like St. George and his knights, challenge any one that says the maker is not the kindest and prettiest maiden in all London."

"Do nothing of the kind," said Alice; "I made the gloves for

your hands, not to wear in your cap. And Oswald, that's for you," she added, as she gave my companion a fine large rosette made of many-coloured ribbon, which he then and there, with many acknowledgments, fastened into his cap.

"Sister Alice," I said—for she was like a sister to both of us—"are you coming to see the games?"

"Yes," she answered, "my father means to take me with Mistress Lofken and your mother, Oswald; so remember when you begin that our eyes are looking on you, and do your best."

"That we will," cried both of us at once, and I ventured to promise she should have the quintain prize in return for the gloves she had given me, but she bade me go and win it before she was asked to accept it; and when I assured her that I meant beyond all question to get it, she slyly reminded me of the last time I ran; and bidding us good-bye, tripped away to get her father's breakfast.

We were engaged in discussing a common theme with us—the merits of the fair maiden who had just left us, and for whom we both had a considerable liking, when the bell tolled the hour of seven, and warned us that we must get away. I was dressed in a short coat fitting close to the body, made of scarlet taffeta, with full sleeves to below the elbow; a belt of buff leather fastened with a silver clasp which my dear father had always worn, leather breeches going to below the knee-cap, dark brown stockings, and strong black leather shoes. Across my left shoulder and fastened on the right hip I carried a blue silk sash. These, with a black velvet cap and the white gloves which Alice had made for me, caused me to cut no inconsiderable figure, at least in my own opinion.

Carrow, upon whom I had that morning bestowed especial care, knew as well as I did that the day was to be an exceptional one. She whinnied again and again as I undid her halter and turned her round in her stall to put the bridle on. No need this morning to coax her into taking the bit into her mouth. She longed to show off her finery as much as her master desired to show off his, and the additional trappings which I had hung about her were as strong helps to her vanity as an ell of gay ribbon to the

vanity of a serving wench. She was saddled and bridled and I was on her back in five minutes after I entered the stable, and by eight o'clock I had reached the scene of the sports in Smithfield, whither Oswald, joined by Bell, Geoffrey Staple, and other of our comrades, had preceded me. I had ridden down West Cheap, past Queen Eleanor's Cross, and so by Giltspur Street into the open space where already were assembled a large number of the young men and lads who were to take part in the games. On the west side, between the Horsepool and Turnmill Brook—in the space covered by the elm-trees—was a place set apart for the horses of those who desired to mingle with the crowd on foot. The stables of mine host of the Salutation and of the Golden Crown were not a quarter large enough to comply with the demands, so accommodation was furnished in the open ground beneath the elms. In front of the great gate of St. Bartholomew's Priory stood the quintain, a high post of wood rooted firmly in the ground, having at the top a cross-bar of some weight, which revolved when struck on either arm. At the end of one arm was a large shield fastened, whereon was painted in rude fashion the head of a Turk with evil-looking eyes and bloodthirsty expression. From the other end hung a bag of sand, which swayed to and fro as the arm of the cross was moved, and which was meant to punish the unskilful tilter who, having struck the Turk's head with his pole, was not deft or active enough to escape the bag which his blow set in motion. It was from such a bag that I drew the enthusiasm which inspired me to-day.

A ring had been marked out around the quintain, wherein the horses might run. Just outside of it, and farther to the westward, stood the pel, a wooden stump supporting the figure of an armed man, which was to be attacked on foot with wooden lances, the assailant covering himself after each blow as he would be bound to do in actual warfare. Then in an inclosed space before the wall of the hospital was the lane where was to be shooting at the popinjay. Temporary butts had been erected in the northern part of the field towards No Man's Land and the friary which Sir Walter Manny lately built for the monks of the Chartreux,

and at these were to be tried the skill of shooters in the long and crossbow.

Two rings were marked out in the centre of Smithfield, wherein was to be shown the prowess of those who handled the sword and buckler; so that, all these considered, there was as much of amusement toward as we could desire to have.

Sir Robert Knollys, of Crockers Lane, near the White Friars, a valiant soldier, of whom more hereafter, was he who governed the sports; and to assist him in the duties of his office, which included those of umpire, prize-giver, settler of disputes, and arranger-general of all that was to be done, were Lord Robert Fitzwater, of Conyhope Lane, Sir Simon Burley, the king's special friend, of Lime Street, and Sir John Nevill, of the Leadenhall. These gentlemen were early in the field, and having selected the portion of it over which each was to preside, the day's sport began with shooting at the butts.

Oswald Barnes was the first to shoot a quarrel. He strung up his crossbow to the wheel in the handle, selected a sound square bolt from a number in his bag, and placed it on the rest in front of the string, which was at full tension and ready for work. Oswald took steady aim at the object marked on the butt, grasped the handle of his bow firmly in both hands, and as the word "Shoot!" left the lips of the master of the crossbowmen, his bolt annihilated the interval between the bow and the mark, striking the target full in the centre.

A shout of applause followed the hit, and others came to try their luck and see how near they could match Oswald's play, since it was impossible to beat it. The shooting was excellent, and called forth again and again cries of approval and encouragement, as the shooters sent their bolts well home to the mark; but do what they could, there was not one who could do what Oswald had done, and he was declared by Sir John Nevill to be victor in the match. A spare bow and two of the best strings Grub Street *

* Grub Street was the special *habitat* of stringers and arrow makers, called fletchers (from *fliche*, an arrow).

could produce were the fruits of his victory ; and as he received them from the hands of Sir Robert Knollys, and that good knight complimented him upon the address he had shown, Oswald's face beamed all over with an honest glow of pleasure, and, thanking the donor, he turned away to the longbow butt.

This was placed at two hundred yards from the shooting spot—that is, about double the distance of the crossbow range—and as the longbow was the weapon most popular among the people, and that in the use of which they excelled, this part of the field was crowded with candidates for honours.

The shooting was admirable, and in the match which was now on—between the 'prentices of Vintry Ward and East Cheap—it seemed for a long time a doubtful question to which side the prize would come. Six apprentices upheld the honour of either ward, and they shot alternately, first one from Vintry and then one from East Cheap. I was of the six who fought for East Cheap, and just as Oswald came up, flushed with success, I was about to make the last shot on our side, and the last in the match.

“ Good luck to you, Hubert ! ” sang out Oswald.

“ Hush ! ” was my discourteous reply, for the excitement I was in at the prospect of what was before me made me feel apprehensive of my attention being taken off ; and, greatly impressed by the responsibility of what I had to do, I stepped forward to the shooting line and took my place.

The Vintry lads had driven us closer than we, in our conceit, imagined it possible they could have done. To three bull's-eye hits and two hits in the ring surrounding the eye which were scored to East Cheap, Vintry Ward had four bull's-eyes and two hits in the outer ring. The seven arrows stood stiffly out of the bull's-eye as nearly as possible in a circle on the outer edge of the ring, but one of them, which belonged to Vintry, stood nearest to the centre of the eye, and was adjudged the winning shaft of those that were yet in.

My bow was made out of a single piece of yew, and five feet six inches in length. My father's woodman, Gunther, had made it for me, and during the last year of my residence at Brooklet I

had many times tested its excellent qualities. It was not a showy weapon, but I knew that I could depend upon it if my own hand did not fail me.

Amidst a silence which quite awed me I strung my bow, and drew out of my belt the arrow which I had made for the purpose. As I was about to place it on the string I looked up, and saw Master Philpot, Alice, Mistress Barnes, and other friends standing in the press, and the knowledge that their eyes were looking at me served, instead of shaking my firmness, to nerve me to the shooting point.

The arrow lay upon the string. I took a long steady view at the target, being so wholly fascinated by it that I positively saw nothing else for the time, and, without staying to correct my aim, as it is called—but, as I think, to unsteady it—I drew the bow-string up to my ear, bringing the arrow-head to its place in the centre of the arc, and then let it fly.

Twang! sounded the cord as it flew forward from its confinement, and on rushed the arrow in a gently-curved line, till it buried itself in the centre of the bull's-eye.

The breath which had been as it were suspended throughout the crowd now found vent in a most deafening cheer. "Hurrah!" "Well done!" "Excellent!" resounded all around; and I, elated with my triumph, stood enjoying the victory which lately seemed about to be snatched away. Amongst the loudest in their plaudits were the Vintry lads themselves, who, having done so well in their execution, could afford to be generous to the side that had beaten them. But the greatest pleasure I derived from the lucky hit was when I received from the hand of Alice Philpot the prize which Sir Robert Knollys awarded to me. As daughter of the first merchant in East Cheap Ward, the apprentices had asked permission for her to give away the prize; and when she, receiving the token—a silver beaker—from Sir Robert's hand, advanced to where I was, and in an unaffected, simple way gave it up to me, looking all the time so pretty in her comely maiden dress, I felt as if I should like to do nothing else than win prizes at shooting-matches, so she might be the distributor of them.

After this there was sword-and-buckler play—in which I got but the second prize—more shooting, the popinjay, the pel, foot-races between rival schools, dancing bears and performing apes, and many more diversions, which took up the morning till eleven o'clock. At eleven o'clock Lord Fitzwater, who had charge of the quintain-ground, gave orders to clear a space for the play. While this was being done, I walked over to the elms on the west side of the field, and took the faithful Carrow from the ostler to whose custody I had given her, tightened the girths, vaulted into the saddle, and rode gently over to the gate of the priory. Carrow quivered with excitement, and so exuberant were her spirits that I almost feared to trust her among the crowd. I knew she had hoofs and the crowd had knives, and that, though they might tease her into using her hoofs, they would not be backward to pay her account with them in cold iron. However, we arrived without annoyance at the starting place, and there bided our turn.

Will Allein was there, and Alfred Bell, young Simon Burley, Walter Blake, and Francis Cave, with all the youths of the city who could get a decent mount for the occasion. Oswald Barnes was not a runner, having been unable to procure a horse.

The quintain was of the usual kind, such as I have described; perhaps it was a trifle more gorgeous, in respect of the many-coloured paints which adorned it, than was common, and the Saracen was perhaps a little more than wontedly terrific in his aspect to-day, out of deference to the large concourse which had met to gaze on him. The tilter's course, in which the horses were to run, was smooth and sanded; it was circular, having a diameter of thirty-two feet, and was guarded on its outer edge from the pressure of the people by stout barriers covered with scarlet baize. At the starting-place was a little pen in which the tilters were arranged according to their order of entry.

Will Allein, who, as a quintain tilter of established fame, was allowed the privilege of beginning the play, was gathering up his horse for the first course, when a stir was made in the knot of men surrounding Lord Fitzwater, and a gentleman who was

recognised at once for Sir Walter Hood burst into the open, and pointing to the arm of the cross which was to be struck, demanded in an angry tone who had dared to do that.

Every one looked up at the arm, and there, sure enough, nailed over the Saracen's face, and right in the place where the scornful blows were to be delivered, was an exact figure of a grey falcon, which all knew well to be the badge of the Duke of Lancaster.

It seems that whilst the spectators had been occupied with the other games in the field, some saucy wight had climbed the quintain-post, and lying along the tilt-arm of the cross, had nailed the falcon on the figure; and not only so, but had nailed it upside downwards, as is done with the arms of those who are adjudged traitors. The bystanders were impatient for the game to begin, and they had not, moreover, such feeling of affection for the duke as would make them desirous of staying until the objectionable emblem should be removed. Lord Fitzwater also seemed disinclined to stop the sport, and saying that it was a knavish trick which he would punish if he could detect the offender, but that the bird would be knocked down at the first blow on the quintain, and that therefore Sir Walter need not trouble further about it, requested him to move out of Will Allein's path.

But Sir Walter was peremptory, and swore by the Mass the game should not proceed till the figure had been removed; and, drawing his sword, he placed himself in front of Allein's horse.

The requests and the orders of Lord Fitzwater had no effect. The people began to get excited and angry. Cries of "Ride over him!" "Down with Duke John!" sounded here and there, followed in less time than it takes to say so by a shower of missiles of all sorts and sizes directed at the person of Sir Walter Hood. He stood to his ground grimly and boldly, and whether out of respect for his glittering sword or for the courage with which he resented a most undoubted affront to his lord, no man ventured to lay hands upon him.

"Have a care, Sir Walter!" cried Will Allein, as, unable to brook the hindrance any longer, he prepared himself for the trial.

"Come at your peril!" shouted Hood, as the lad loosed the

curb on his horse's mouth. "You touch not that badge if I have power to stop you, and so be warned!"

But the warning came too late or was disregarded, for Will, fired by the opposition and encouraged by the presence of his comrades, clapped spurs to his horse and rode forward with a cheer.

Sir Walter's position seemed a dangerous one. The horse in full career was almost on to him, when, just as it came within five paces of where he was standing, the knight sprang dexterously on one side, and as the noble creature came abreast of him, he plunged his sword right into its heart.

The scene that followed is beyond my power to describe. The barriers were broken down, the excited multitude poured like a stream on to the ground, and made for the spot where Hood stood at bay. In an instant he was rushed upon, tripped up, and tightly bound with his arms behind him, and led off by the people in the direction of the Standard in West Cheap. I but saw him as he moved away, pale and bloody with the blows the people had given him, and knew not until afterwards that in the very act of being stripped for execution by the enraged multitude, he had been rescued by Sir Nicholas Brembre and a large body of the city guard.

Our whole care was for poor Will Allein, who, having been violently thrown by the sudden fall of his horse in full gallop, lay on the ground moaning and insensible. With great difficulty he was got home on a litter made for him out of what we could find available on the spot, and then the leech declared that several of his ribs were broken, and that there was a double fracture of the left arm.

This made an end of the day's work—a sad one it had been. Lord Fitzwater declared the termination of the sports, and the people dispersed to their different homes to talk over the outrage which they had that morning witnessed, and to take counsel how they might more thoroughly avenge it.



CHAPTER VII.

HOW SIR WALTER HOOD ESCAPED THE FURY OF THE
LONDONERS—ALICE PHILPOT.

"Hir person he shalle afore him sette,
Hir laughing eyen, persaunt and clere,
Hir shappe, hir fourme, hir goodly chere,
Hir mouth that is so gracious,
So swete, and eke so saverous."

CHAUCER.

WILL ALLEIN lay in a dangerous state for some days, fever having seized him in addition to the other ills he was suffering ; but when a week had elapsed, and his naturally good health had got the mastery of this distemper, the leeches declared that his life would be saved, but that time would be wanted to mend the broken bones. And so he lay, poor fellow, for many weeks, strapped and bandaged, and perfectly helpless, bearing with patience and courage his evil plight. His mother, who loved him as mothers that have but one son are wont to do, watched over the sick youth with anxious solieitude ; and to her tender and unwearying care he owed, under Him who is the Great Physician, the preservation of his life. Her hand it was that smoothed his pillow, and cheered him up when depressed by illness ; her gentle voice it was that whispered comfort and consolation to him at times when pain racked him almost to murmuring ; and Will, who, though as brave a lad as ever walked, and as hardy as many who numbered more years than he did, was so much endowed with the gentle spirit of her who watched over him, that oftentimes, rather than cause her the sorrow of witnessing his suffering, he would conceal that he was in pain, and cheat her into

the belief that he was almost as well as she would wish him to be.

Several months passed away before he was able to move about again, and in all that time I do not think he uttered one unkind word against the man who was the cause of his disaster. "He did his duty," Will used to say when any one urged Sir Walter's cruelty; "he did it somewhat roughly, perhaps, but if it had not been that poor Harold lost his life, I could not have complained of what happened to myself."

Will was honest, too, in saying so; for years afterwards, when under much altered circumstances Sir Walter and he again met, to fight together under the English flag, not only did Will not show any malice for the injury which the other had done to him, but asked and obtained permission to serve in Sir Walter's own company, because he knew him for a valiant and proper gentleman, who did thoroughly whatever he professed to do, and allowed no considerations of personal regard to interfere in any way with the execution of his duty.

As for Sir Walter, on the day he was pounced upon and led away by the infuriated Londoners, he owed his life, as I have already said, to the lucky arrival of Sir Nicholas Brembre. That knight, who was also lord mayor, having heard of the riot which was going on in Smithfield, although he had avoided the spot where the folk were disporting themselves—for he loved not the commons—in the interests of the city's peace, and for sake of the Duke of Lancaster, his friend, took arms and marched with a strong body of archers towards the scene of the disturbance. Emerging from the street in which Guildhall stands, he turned to the right, past Milk Street and Bread Street, and, coming up to the Standard which stands in Cheap, found Sir Walter Hood in the hands of the people, with neck bared and shirt torn down, about to be put to death.

Spurring his horse into the crowd, and followed by a number of his archers, he came to the place where Sir Walter stood, and demanding in an imperious tone what this rabble meant, and ordering the people to depart immediately to their homes under

pain of hanging, directed his men to release the prisoner's arms. Then, ordering Sir Walter to be brought along well guarded as his own prisoner, Sir Nicholas Brembre rode back to the Guild-hall, amid the curses of the people, not so loudly spoken as they were deeply felt. The influence of the Duke of Lancaster procured his servant's liberation, and Sir Walter remained without further punishment than the dreadful danger he had passed through—enough and to spare, perhaps, for the offence he had committed.

Both Will Allein and Sir Walter Hood will be mentioned again in the course of this story. Let me now speak a few words about another of our friends, of whom more will also be said before I shall have finished—I mean little Alice.

She was, as I observed when first noticing her, only twelve years old when I came to live with Master Philpot, and she looked younger than she really was. She was, as I have also said, complete mistress of the house, not by reason of any imperiousness of temper, but because her simple, winning ways made her to reign queen paramount in the hearts of the household. She had all our affections in simple fee. All loved her for her own and her father's sake, and all felt a special interest in her for that she was motherless. To me who had been brought up entirely among men, whose mother had died before I was old enough to form any lasting remembrance of her, and who had never had the advantage of knowing a sister's love, Alice was at once a novelty and a charm.

Oswald Barnes, who had sisters, used to tell me I talked nonsense when I spoke in such admiration as I did about sisters' kindness, and how happy a thing it must be to be a constant recipient of it. He used to say that sisters were all very well, were good enough to make fun of, and nice enough in themselves sometimes, but that for his part he could not see what there was in them to make such a fuss about, and that what I said of them was not worth a broken straw. In fact, he used to talk as many other lads talk of their sisters, to run them down, and even to snub them sharply on occasions; but I remember that, although he thus spoke, he had really such a love for them, that he would

not certainly have been without them; and once when he had had some difference with little Eglantine, his eldest sister, and was relating the story of his supposed wrongs in the presence of several of us, he fought and thrashed Arthur Piers, the creed-maker's son of Ave Maria Lane, for saying in a slighting tone, by way of sympathising with him, that Eglantine's hair was of a nasty red. And when his other sister, Mary, a winsome child of ten years, lay on the bed where a mortal sickness had stretched her, who but Oswald would beg to be allowed to wait upon her, brought her fresh flowers which he had been as far as Finsbury to cull for her, and strove in everything to minister to the comfort of the suffering child. So that, in spite of Oswald's lectures, I kept my own opinion about the pleasure of having sisters, and Alice, who to me was in place of a sister, never gave me cause to change it.

She the only child of her family, and I the only one of mine, we had kindred sympathies which begot mutual confidences, and so whenever Margaret had spoken harshly, as that good woman sometimes did, or old Peter had been ill-tempered and refused to let her have her own way in the arranging of the flower-garden, or whenever anything lay on her heart to oppress it, Alice came to me and told me of it in a sort of civil shrift or confession. She was always sure of sympathy from Hubert, so to Hubert she came whenever she needed it.

I, too, on the other hand, made a confidante of the child, and told her most of the thoughts which occupied my mind — my plans for doing things, which for the most part were never realised — my desire to do something which should make my name famous, and the thousand different schemes which fired my boyish ambition. She used to listen attentively to all I had to say, looking up into my face as if she were reading my thoughts before I expressed them; and though she never offered any advice, and confined her assistance to wishing me luck and prosperity, I always felt a relief after I had said my say to her, and fancied I could then discuss with clearer understanding the practical part of the story with action-loving Oswald.

Part, perhaps, of this friendship which sprang up between us was due to the knowledge of how extremely fond my dear father had been of Alice, and how on the few occasions when she had been with Master Philpot at Brooklet, he had busied himself to please and amuse her, out of the great affection he had for her. She was never tired of hearing me speak about him, and it was a source of much happiness that I could thus talk of one so eminently beloved by me to this child, who herself had of him none but grateful recollections.

The relation in which I stood to Master Philpot, the disparity in our respective ages, and a certain reservedness which, although accompanied by the most complete kindness, had the effect of keeping a boy from opening his mind voluntarily before him, prevented me from resorting to him when the thoughts in my mind became too big to be allowed to pass in smother. Oswald Barnes, though my trusty friend and ally, especially after the affair in Tassel Close, had not that similarity of disposition which would make me resort to him on all the occasions in which a friend would be useful. He had not patience enough to listen to all my unpractical suggestions ; and, except when action was to be taken, he was the most unwilling divider of a care of any that I knew. To none other of my acquaintance did I sufficiently bind myself to make me share my thoughts with them ; and as in Alice I found both a ready and sympathising listener, so I desired no better a counsellor in aught that I undertook.

There was nothing I would not gladly do for Alice if it might in any way add a grain to her content, and happy in the thought that she was equally desirous of doing all she could for me, I lived on in the regular discharge of my duties in Master Philpot's house, until an event happened which shall be narrated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEATH OF EDWARD III.—JOHN PHILPOT VISITS PRINCE RICHARD
AT KENNINGTON, AND MAKES AN ADDRESS TO HIM—JOHN
OF GAUNT.

"Mighty victor, mighty lord,
Low on his funeral couch he lies!
No pitying heart, no eyes afford
A tear to grace his obsequies."

GRAY.

"Le roi est mort—Vive le roi!"



THE event alluded to at the end of the last chapter was no less a momentous one than the death of the king. I wish I could report more pleasantly of his death, which, as I was told by one who was about the king's court at Shene, was on this wise.

The noble king had been very ill for four months, and during that time the men who

more adore the sun rising than the sun which will presently set had fallen off in their attendance upon him. In spite of the great deeds he had done and the special benefits he had con-

ferred upon many, there were towards the close of his time none to be found about his sick-room except a few menial servants and Mistress Perrers, to whom he had shown much kindness; and even these forsook him in his last moments, that they might take for themselves whatever came to their hands, and batten on the pasture from which they must soon be driven out. Even Mistress Perrers — Alice Pierce as men commonly called her — set an example most heinous to all the viler folk. As soon as she perceived that the king's breath came less easily, that his eyes were getting heavy with the weight of death, and that vital warmth was leaving him, she, who owed all she had to the dying king's bounty, stripped the rings with precious stones which were placed upon his hands, and taking them to herself, forsook him and fled. There was but one poor priest (and he it was that told me of this) who remained with the king, and he, pitying the altered condition of the royal man, and wishing to help his soul to find grace, drew near to the couch on which the king lay dying. Unable to hear the confession which could not for lack of strength be spoken, the priest made signs that the king should pray for pardon of his sins, and should freely ask forgiveness of all whom he had offended. The king took the crucifix which was put into his hand, kissed it reverently as the big tears of contrition rolled down his furrowed cheeks, and then placed his hands together in the act of prayer. The priest stood by, and gave the penitent assurance of God's pardon to those who are truly contrite; and, bending down his ear to catch the words which the lips muttered, he heard in a faint whisper mention of the holiest name. A few seconds more, and Edward Plantagenet, the dread of France and Scotland, the valiant warrior and most mighty prince, was no more than a lump of lifeless flesh, no more to be feared than the dog who died yesterday. This happened on the 21st of June, on the Vigil of St. Alban, the English protomartyr.

Before the old king was really dead, but when it was known that he was in a dying state, a number of the citizens came to our house and demanded to have speech with Master Philpot. Several of them were shut up with him for a long time in the large dining-

room, and at the end of their discussion I was directed to get things ready on the instant for a journey to Kennington, where the Princess Dowager and the young Prince Richard lay. Master Philpot, in his finest velvet cloak, richest body-coat, and gayest apparel, in half an hour set forth on his horse Flamand, accompanied by Walworth, Twiford, John Lofken, and many more. Oswald Barnes, to whom was given a large case of parchments to carry, rode on the stable pony, and I, dressed out in my brightest weeds, and with the handsome dagger I had won at the sword-and-buckler play in Smithfield dangling at my waist, followed on Carrow.

We had a pleasant ride that morning as we trotted along, talking of many things, and wondering why we were going to the palace, and what sort of place the palace itself might be.

We quitted our house at ten in the morning, and riding through Fenchurch Street, stayed at Blanch Appleton for Sir Thomas Roos, fetched Sir Simon Burley from Lime Street, Michael Pistoey from Greengate, and Sir John Nevill from the Leadenhall, and thence going towards the river with a constantly increasing company, came to the gate of London Bridge.

"How now, old Grim-face?" said Oswald to some one who seemed to be looking at him from one of the upper towers of the bridge-gate. "Wilt know me again when I pass on the return?"

"Let be," said the warder, who was impatient of any notice bestowed upon his topmost tenants; "leave your bantering, and mind how you come to ask me for lodging. I've none but top-story places, and not many of them to spare."

The remark was a perfectly just one, for that to which Oswald spoke was but one of about thirty severed heads which grinned on the points of pikes on the top of the battlements, and looked down as a warning to those who rode below.

The gate being thrown back, and Oswald's parley with the gate-keeper being over, we passed on to the bridge, and between the handsome houses which stood on either side of the narrow way. Master Philpot with his friends rode together in front, and we lads brought up the rear, there being an interval of several yards

between them and us. A part of Carrow's bridle having chafed off and broken, I stayed at a spurrier's half-way across the bridge to get the damage repaired, and while the man was employed in setting the bridle right, an incident occurred which was like to have had an important bearing on what my master and his friends were about.

Oswald—for of course he stopped with me—having nothing to do while we waited at the shop, thought it necessary to exercise his spare energies upon the winning of a trophy, which he saw and coveted. From a long pole that stuck out across the pathway in front of the spurrier's stall, hung, as a sign of the man's trade, a huge spur, made of wood and fastened by the foot-chain to the pole. It hung temptingly down, almost within reach of a horseman riding under it. It was dangling just over Oswald's pony's neck as he stood behind me, waiting while the spurrier made good the defect in my bridle.

For three minutes Oswald eyed with a hungry look the bait which hung so close. Three minutes—no more—and then he found it irresistible. He drew himself a little on one side, so as to be out of the spurrier's sight, and rising in his stirrups, to come within reach of the fastening of the spur, set briskly to work to disconnect it from the pole.

Though the operation was not so easy as my friend had imagined, it was highly probable that another minute would have seen it complete, had it not been that the spurrier's son, who was standing on the outside staircase of the house beyond, was, unknown to Oswald, watching the whole of his proceedings with the liveliest interest.

Just as Oswald had forced back the link of the chain which held the spur, and was about to take possession of his prize, he found himself suddenly flung forward on his saddle-bow by a smart blow in the back from behind; and in that position his spurs catching the flanks of the pony, caused it to plunge, rear, and run backwards, and in its jibbing to overturn a handbarrow which a countryman was wheeling into the city with provisions for the house of the Black Friars. Oswald came to the ground.

A scene of confusion ensued which I cannot properly describe. The spurrier called Oswald a thiefson varlet, and threatened to pitch him into the river; Oswald, disregarding the angry words of the spurrier, flew at the spurrier's son, and pinned him by the throat against the wall of the house, till the countryman, coming up, began to belabour Oswald with the case of parchments, which in the course of the squabble had slipped from my friend's grasp, and was now being used as the handiest weapon that lay within the indignant peasant's reach.

All this was done in less time than I have taken to tell it; but I foresaw that if we did not set forward at once we should miss our master altogether; so bidding Oswald desist from choking the lad who had assailed him, and threatening the countryman with all the terrors of the Tower dungeons unless he instantly let go his hold on Oswald, I hastily settled with the spurrier, and, joined by Oswald, rode as hard as I could after those who had gone before.

Just as we had ridden at full speed over the bridge, and were turning to strike across the fields by the Marshalsea in Southwark, a horseman, travel-stained and spurring a jaded horse, dashed past us at a gallop in the direction of the city.

"Whence so quick?" I shouted as the man rushed by. I bent my head on one side to catch the sound of his voice, and heard, as I thought, the answer, "Battle Abbey."

I cursed Oswald for his freak, which had so much delayed us, but for which he had been sufficiently punished, and we rode together as hard as our steeds would carry us until we overtook the advanced party as they were about to enter the garden of the palace.

"In mischief again, I suppose," said Master Philpot, addressing us both, but looking at Oswald. "When will you learn to behave like what you are, instead of like the unkempt loons who prowl about in search of injuries they may do?"

Oswald was about to relate the part he had had in the matter which detained us, when Philpot sharply asked him for the case of parchments that had been intrusted to his care. Both Oswald

and myself now felt heartily ashamed. The case, which had slipped from his grasp during our encounter on the bridge, had been forgotten in our hurry to get off; and now it seemed it was essentially necessary to the furtherance of the work these good citizens had in hand. What it contained we neither of us knew when we left home in the morning. Imagine our consternation and horror when we now heard that the case contained no less an important matter than Master Philpot's written speech, which it had cost the company two full hours of that morning's work to elaborate and put together.

It was too late now to go back and look for it, though we would gladly have gone, if only to hide our culpable heads. The case might, for aught we knew, be yet lying in the place where it had fallen; or the vengeful spurrier might have thrown it whither he threatened to throw Oswald—into the river. Anyhow, it was an idle errand to be sent on when the procession was preparing to enter the house where the parchments were to have been used that very hour.

If any speech was to be made at all, Master Philpot must trust to his memory, or to the eloquence with which the occasion might inspire him.

We slunk behind like two whipped dogs, and followed the citizens into the palace. There we found, expecting and ready to receive the citizens, the Princess Joan, widow of the most noble Black Prince, and mother of the young child who was soon to become king, the Duke of Lancaster, Lord Latymer, Sir Nicholas Bond, Sir Richard Adderberry, and others of the Princess's Council.

There was no trace on the brow of the duke of the recent heavy difference between himself and the citizens. You could not have known, had you looked on that calm, thoughtful face, so benignly turned to welcome us, that that was the man whose life a few short weeks before had been eagerly sought by the Londoners, and who was known as a patient waiter upon vengeance, but the rare forgiver of a wrong.

Master Philpot could not quite understand the open and cour-

teous bearing of the great enemy of the commons. He made only the obeisance which good manners required of him to the duke, and then turned towards the spot where Prince Richard stood by the side of his mother and the before-mentioned knights. Ignoring the prepared oration which the tide, ere this, had borne as far as Gravesend, Master Philpot, out of the natural eloquence of his heart, thus delivered :

“We bring news, most excellent prince, to which we cannot refer without extreme sorrow, concerning the undoubtedly imminent death of our most invincible King Edward, who has guarded and ruled us and this kingdom so many years in such perfect peace, but who now, by the evident signs of death upon him, is ceasing to be our sovereign. Wherefore we ask, on behalf of the citizens and community of London, that you will take into your gracious regard this city which is your chamber; you who alone will shortly be our king; whom alone”—and here Master Philpot, emphasising the last word, looked hard at my lord of Lancaster, who remained perfectly unmoved—“we recognise as our king; to whose rule and governance alone we bend, and to whose good will and pleasure we submit ourselves in deed as well as in word. And that we may further carry out the commission given to us, let us inform your Highness how unspeakably your city has been moved by the prolonged absence of your Highness from her; she who is so famously devoted to you, that not only is she ready to spend her goods for you, but also, if need be, her blood. Therefore we approach you in order to pray that for the solace of the citizens and for your own safety and comfort your Highness will be pleased again to dwell within her. Above all, most excellent prince, we especially pray that you will deign to put an end to the discord which lately has arisen, through the wiles of some, between our citizens and our lord the Duke of Lancaster—a discord profitable to nobody, and hurtful to many—and that you will make a peace beneficial to the duke himself and to our citizens.”

To this address, delivered with modesty and much dignity, in spite of the absence of Oswald's scroll, which should have refreshed the speaker's memory, the prince and his councillors lis-

tened with grave attention ; and after the prince, by way of reply, had assured the citizens that he would endeavour in all things to comply with their dutiful wishes, the Duke of Lancaster stepped forward with most courteous bearing, and spoke a short speech to the deputies. He told them how sorry he was that, through the folly of those who should have known better, this misunderstanding had sprung up betwixt himself and the Londoners ; that he deprecated entirely the quarrel and the causes of it, and was most heartily glad of the advance that had been made towards a renewal of friendship. "For my part," said he, "in proof of my desire to be at one with you, I will, on acknowledgment by you of the wrongs done to me, implore the king to release all who have been imprisoned for despite of me ; I will freely forgive all the past, and for the future cherish the good citizens of London as if they were my brethren."

Lord Latymer, Sir Simon Burley, and two other gentlemen here stepped forward, and swore by their knighthood that no harm should come to any on account of this submission to the duke ; and the prince using his endeavours, the citizens acknowledged that wrong had been done. Then the duke, in token of reconciliation, embraced each of the citizens one after the other ; and they, glad at heart to have done so good a day's work, made their obeisance to the prince, and set out on their return home.

And all this was done on the same day that King Edward died.



CHAPTER IX.

THE ABBOT OF BATTLE SENDS WILLIAM ARCHDALE TO SAY HOW
THE TOWN OF RYE HAD BEEN BURNED BY THE FRENCH—
WILL ARCHDALE.

“The hote summer hadde made his hewe al broun,
And certainly he was a good felowe.”

Canterbury Tales.

WHEN we reached East Cheap that evening, there was intelligence which did not please some of the party.

My ear had rightly informed me as to the words which the horseman had shouted in reply to my question in the morning. The rider had come on an express message to the Duke of Lancaster and to Master John Philpot, from Hamode Offyngton, Abbot of Battle, in Sussex, and his name was William Archdale.

Archdale was a man whom one could not help liking at first sight. A well-proportioned man, of a build rather sturdy than slight, with florid face and curly brown hair, bright blue eyes, handsome nose and mouth, and an expression of countenance which bespoke frankness and good-nature. His dress was simple and serviceable. On his head he wore a plain steel basnet, surmounted by a small spike; in place of a common coat he wore a stout leather acton, padded and guarded so as to save him from any but the most hardy thrust; his breeches were of stout quilted cloth, and his lower limbs were protected by strong buskins of hide. Over his shoulders drooped a dark brown riding-cloak, on which was embroidered the red cross charged with a mitre, the badge of the Abbot of Battle. In the baldrick, which crossed over his right shoulder, hung a long straight sword, which, with a misé-

ricorde, or short dagger, carried in his belt, furnished him—for he knew how to use them—with very fair means of defence.

He had just come back from the Savoy, whither he had gone to deliver his packet for the Duke of Lancaster, as we trotted into the stable-yard on our return from Kennington; and as Master Philpot dismounted from his horse, the messenger accosted him with—

“Letters from my Lord Abbot of Battle, worshipful sir. The contents are urgent, and I have lost no time in bringing them. May it please you receive them?” And drawing a parcel from the breast lining of his acton, he gave it into my master’s hand.

“How fares it with my good friend Hamo de Offyngton?” inquired Philpot, as he examined the seal and superscription on the cover.

“Well in bodily health, I thank God,” answered the messenger, “but troubled, sir, by that which he tells you in the letter.”

“You have ridden far, and must be weary,” said my master. “How far have you come to-day?”

“From Battle Abbey, sir,” replied the man. “I have accounted for three horses on the journey, and confess to feeling somewhat the worse for the travel.”

“What is your name, my man?” inquired Philpot.

“Will Archdale, at your service, sir; a Sussex man and yeoman of the abbey, and humble servant to as good a master as breathes between this and the town of Rye.”

“Thanks, then, good Archdale, for the despatch you have used. Here, Hubert, take Archdale with you; see that he wants for nothing we can give him—and good night to you both.”

So saying, Master Philpot walked into the house, with the abbot’s letters in his hand, while Will Archdale and I turned first to the stable to see that our horses were properly cared for; and, that done, we too repaired to our quarters.

A very short time served to put Archdale and myself on the best possible terms. He was my senior by some four years, but that was no bar to our friendship. On the contrary, I liked him all the better that he was older and yet made himself my equal.

His jolly nature loved society; and while he was a companion meet for a man, he would, in the largeness of his heart, commend himself to the youngest child, and win its friendship. It was impossible to dislike him; his very roughness was not rude, but merely the awkwardness which came of his life-long residence in country places.

A drench at the pump, and a change of the irksome part of his dress, revived Archdale sufficiently to enable him to do ample justice to the supper old Margaret set before us; and as platterful on platterful of food vanished down our guest's throat, the old dame seemed utterly bewildered to know whereever he could stow it all away, and began at last to talk to herself about a disease which some forbear of hers had had, the chief feature in which was an enormous capacity for swallowing the best meats in the pantry, and how she thought she could cure it by virtue of some rare herb, which was only to be found on the graves of unchristened babes. Her amazement was no whit abated when she saw Peter Wall bringing in for the fifth time a great black-jack of strong ale, which had been as many times emptied; and her feelings could not have been one remove from sheer disgust when Archdale, after performing these prodigies of eating and drinking, flung himself down on her own bench, close to the fire, and began to remark despondingly on the falling off in his appetite.

But whatever her feelings were, she kept them at that time to herself. She had a special reason for wanting to keep this strange feeder in good humour, although—but she knew it not then—it would have taken twenty such as she to raise a wrinkle on the smoothness of honest Will Archdale's temper. She was aware that he had come in urgent haste with some special message from the abbot to her master, and she dearly longed to know, just for the sake of knowing, what that special message which needed such despatch might be. So suppressing her opinions on the trencher-work she had just witnessed, and taking no notice of the unprecedented insolence that had dared to invade and take possession of her own special bench, in the top drawer of which she kept the simples of which the serving-men and wenches stood in

profound awe—she commenced her attack upon Will Archdale's secret, and began to beat about the bush for her game.

"It must be dreadful work riding so far as you have done, master," she said in a pitying tone of voice.

"Well, I suppose it would screw *you* up, old lady; but I don't complain so much as the horses do," answered Will.

"Ah! it's fearful work for them, poor things, a-trotting and a-bein' spurred and lashed as if they had no more feelings than they that ride them."

"No feelings, dame, bless you! why, the horses were born to work, and they don't mind going hard, until they get right down tired. For my part, *I* never distress a horse if I can possibly spare him, unless occasion requires it, and then I don't spare him any more than I spare myself."

"But what need had you to be riding in this manner, Master Archdale?" inquired Margaret, in her most winning way.

"Just to obey my master's orders," answered Will.

"The message must have been a big one, indeed," replied Margaret, "to make your master—a churchman too—bid you be cruel about taking it."

"He bade me be nothing of the kind, old lady, nor did he tell me whether the message I carried was a big one or a little one. All he told me to do was to carry the letters with all speed to London; and here I am, having obeyed his orders, as tired as a run hare, and, till lately, as hungry as a hunter."

"Well, but you *must* know what it was that made you hurry so," said Margaret, a little peevishly. "It wasn't for nothing you tired out those three horses that Peter heard you tell the master about, I suppose?"

"No, I don't suppose it was," answered Archdale, yawning noisily; "but do you suppose I read the letters I was carrying? Bless your old soul, do you think we are such scholars in the country as you town folk, that we can read—or that, if we could, we would read anything intrusted to us? Do *you* ever read other people's despatches?"

"Bless the man! he's making japes at me. *I* read? Lord

love ye! I thank God I could never read a word of the monkish stuff and nonsense, which they scratch down on the skins of the dear innocent calves and sheep. Not I, indeed. Do you suppose that I, who have lived here in this city, girl and woman, these I don't know how many years—(Archdale suggested twenty-three, but the old lady rebuked him severely for 'a vain and weak-headed young man')—that I would meddle with such things? No, but when I am set to do a thing, I always like to know the why and the wherefore, like an honest woman, and not to go stupidly about it with no more sense than a post."

Even the hit intended by the last words of Margaret's speech failed to stir Archdale. He merely turned himself on his side upon the bench whereon he was stretched at length, and looking at his inquisitor, said,

"You'll get no news out of me, old dame, for I have none to give, and would not tell tales if I could. But all this while," he added, leaping up, "I am forgetting the very particular directions which my lord abbot gave to me as I was jumping into my saddle. 'Will,' said he, 'be sure you drink the health of the fair Dame Margaret on my behalf;' and here I am, ready and willing to obey him even in this, but unable to do so, because this plaguy jack won't hold any more than has been poured into it."

The hint for another jug of beer was taken, but Margaret failed to get the purport of Will's letters out of the faithful servant, who, being by this time pretty thoroughly tired, was glad to accept my invitation to retire for the night. Wishing the kitchen and its occupants good night, we crossed the courtyard which lay between it and our quarters, and climbing the stair which led to our bed-rooms on the upper flat, in ten minutes slept the sleep of weary, healthful lads.

Oswald had been severely lectured by our master for the part he had taken in the day's work, and having been set, by way of punishment, to count over a large quantity of nobles and half-nobles which had come into the king's treasury—Master Philpot being the Parliament's commissioner to receive the taxes voted—did not join us all the evening.

The letters which Archdale had brought from the abbot were indeed important, and the news he had to tell to those authorised to receive them was in the highest degree momentous.

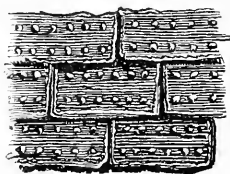
It seems that for some time past the people of Kent and Sussex had known that the French and Spaniards were forming a large armament of troops and ships for the purpose of invading the country; and, in obedience to directions from the English court, they had given their aid to the Earl of Cambridge, Constable of Dover Castle, the Lords Latymer, Cobham, and Clinton, and Sir Stephen de Valence, who were directed to guard the coasts. In most of the ports, especially those towards Thames mouth, beacons had been erected, the keepers of which were enjoined to set them on fire as soon as they saw an enemy's vessel approach "with sail or oars," and to make all the noise in their power, with horns and cries, on hearing which every man should hasten to the spot in his best armour. But there was a sad want of ships to meet the enemy on the water; scarcely a cog or barge in any of the ports was fit to go to sea. This the French knew well, and took their measures accordingly. There was no want of courage in the men of the counties, but that could not avail without the means for displaying it, as appeared but too well from the letters of the Abbot of Battle.

In them the abbot said that Sir John de Vienne, with five great ships, and a number of smaller Spanish vessels under Sir John de Raix, had appeared unexpectedly off the town of Rye, that soldiers had been landed, and the town taken, with a great quantity of spoil and many prisoners; that afterwards the Frenchmen had come to Winchelsea, but had there found the abbot with a number of armed men; and despairing of gaining that, or getting farther entrance into the country, had returned to Rye, and utterly destroyed the town by burning it to ashes; that they had re-embarked in their ships, without it being possible to attack them, carrying with them, after slaying many score of the others, four of the richest citizens, forty-two hogsheads of wine, a great store of booty, and the four beautiful bells which they stole out of the church. He further told how that the town was quite desolate,

and begged that aid might at once be sent to resist any further aggressions.

Will Archdale, who had been with the abbot at Winchelsea, and who had there captured a Frenchman, from whom the designs of the enemy were learned, confirmed by word of mouth all that the abbot had written.

These were heavy news indeed ; and in a council held next day by the citizens of London, it was resolved to proceed at once to the coronation of the king, and then to make all the haste they could to go against the French, lest they should do some greater injury.




CHAPTER X.

KING RICHARD IS CROWNED AT WESTMINSTER—WHAT WE SAW AT THE CORONATION.

“And then I stole all courtesy from heaven,
And dressed myself in such humility
That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths.”

Henry IV.

N the 16th of July, 1377, King Richard was crowned at Westminster, and Oswald and I went to see the pageant. Will Archdale, who was kept in London till some fitting message could be sent back by him, accompanied us, and off we started as early as we could, with the intention of thoroughly enjoying the fun. How we succeeded will be shown at the end of this chapter. For the present I will only tell of what we saw and did at the coronation itself.

We held a short council as to the best way of proceeding—whether we should take a boat at Dowgate or Queenhithe, and pull up to Westminster, or walk through the streets and see what was going on by the way. As Archdale had not been in London before, and wanted to see the fine houses he had heard of, we decided upon the latter course, and at seven o'clock we started, after eating a breakfast at which Archdale excited as much of old Margaret's wonder by his power of putting things away under his doublet as he had done at supper the night before. The parting injunction of Master Philpot was that we should strictly avoid meddling with anybody, and endeavour our utmost to keep out of all quarrels. We promised compliance, and when we did so we meant to act up to our word.

Leaving the house, then, as I have said, at seven o'clock, we walked first towards the river on to Fish Street Hill, in order to show Archdale the house which lately was the residence of the Black Prince, thence by the open space on Thames bank to Cornhill, where Archdale's attention was at once attracted by a scene in which the Tun formed the chief feature. At the door of the prison were a number of sturdy beggars, whose heads had been too addled the night before to be able to distinguish well between "mine" and "thine," and had in this confusion taken to themselves what did not belong to them. They were now, after a night's lodging in the straitest of dungeons, being led away to be punished according to the size of their offences, some with the stocks, and others with beating. A more wobegone motley crew it was not possible to think of. Some had scarcely any clothes with which to hide their nakedness, others had the tattered remnants of better men's coats around them; all were unkempt, unshaven, and dirty, and looked like so many specimens of wretchedness and rascality.

"An uneasy sort of place that," said Archdale, as he looked curiously at the Tun. "What is it called?"

"Well, it is called the Tun," said Oswald, "because of its shape, I suppose. The top part is a conduit. The lower part is a prison, and has been for the last hundred years." *

"It is not an inviting-looking place, I must say," observed Archdale. "I hope it will not be my lot to pass a night in it."

"No fear of that," replied Oswald. "Master Philpot's name would be your key to get out of any such hole in this city."

"I'd rather not need to use it, however," said Archdale, as the prisoners were led away, and we passed on.

Staying a moment to admire the beautiful church of St.

* "Then have ye a fair conduit of sweet water, castellated in the midst of that ward and street. This conduit was first built of stone in the year 1282, by Henry Walles, mayor of London, to be a prison for night walkers, and other suspicious persons, and was called the Tun upon Cornhill, because the same was built somewhat in fashion of a tun standing on the one end." —*Stow's Surrey*.

Michael, and to make passing acquaintance with the renowned Pope's Head Tavern, which once was King John's house, where Hubert de Burgh answered the charges which were made against him at the instance of Henry III., and on the front of which were yet to be seen the royal arms of England, we crossed the Horse-shoe Bridge over Walbrook, turned into Bucklersbury, passed the Queen's Wardrobe, and came into Cheap close by the Cernet's Tower.

Here the preparations for the king's coming were forward and on a grand scale. The Crounsilde, or stone shed which the late king had built by Bow Church, in order better to witness the jousts and games which were held in Cheap, was gaily decked with drapery, and pennons, devices, and quaint conceits. A large image of the sun, King Richard's badge, appeared outside in the centre, supported on either side by the royal arms and the arms of his late loved father, Prince Edward. From the roof streamed the banner of England, in proud contrast with the simple flags which flouted the air from the citizens' houses in countless number. The canvas sheds in which wares were usually sold were for the day removed. No cry this morning of "What d'ye lack, gentles? what d'ye lack?" from the hundreds of apprentices who were wont to ply their masters' trades in this busy part, but who now strutted, like ourselves, in all the licence of holiday, as independent and as free as the air they breathed. On the staircase of each house, and at the lattices of the front upper rooms, were the city ladies in all their beauty, and in the gayest of apparel. Feasts were preparing, serving-men were hurrying to and fro on festive errands, the citizens were assembling for the processions in which they were to take a part—all betokened a city bent on holiday-making, and on throwing cares for the safety of the coasts, for the due prosperity of commerce, to the four winds of heaven.

This day was looked on as one of happiness and joy—the day long looked to for the renewing of peace at home, a thing which long ago, and for so long, had been exiled from it.

In the market-place at the higher end of Cheap had been

erected a building in the form of a castle, out of which were to run two streams of wine. On the four turrets of it were four maidens, dressed in white, and of the same age as the king himself. On his approach they were to blow towards him small shreds of gold-leaf, florins made of paper, and then to come down from the turrets, and offer wine to him and the lords. Finally, there was a small child dressed in cloth of gold, and intended to represent an angel, whose part it was to be let down by machinery from the summit of the tower, and to present a golden crown to the king on behalf of the citizens. In nearly every street we threaded some gay device or pageant had been contrived, but none equalled in beauty or in costliness this which had been prepared by the merchants of Cheap.

Our object being to reach Westminster before the king, we did not stay for his passage through the streets, but made the best of our way through the thoroughfares, which were thronged to overflowing by those who wished to welcome their young sovereign.

Down Paternoster Row to Amen Corner, past my lord of Pembroke's house in Ave Maria Lane, and so to Ludgate. From this we pushed on, elbowing our way through the crowd, across the bridge over the Fleet river, past the church belonging to the Black Friars, and so up Fleet Street to Temple Bar. Every place that we passed was dressed out in gayest colours, with pennons and streamers and conceits of heralds—nowhere could be seen any trace of backwardness to welcome. The Bar itself was a mass of drapery, having intertwined all over it the flags of the principal noblemen, the banners of the city guilds, and the arms of the lord mayor, the whole being surmounted as the Crounsilde was, by the royal standard. The prior of the Knights of St. John had not spared to make the Temple do honour to the occasion. The Bishop of Salisbury's palace and the house of Sir Robert Knollys in Cocker's Lane were also elegantly dressed, while the Savoy, where my lord of Lancaster dwelt, was a perfect pattern of splendour.

All this struck Will Archdale with admiration. He had never

seen so large a town nor so many people together in his life before, while the beauty of the hangings and the richness of the people's dresses filled him with amazement. Who would have thought, to see all this joy and gladness in the people, all this desire to welcome and make him glad whom they delighted to honour, that in a few short years so great a gulf should yawn, and separate the king from his people by an abyss that could not by any means be bridged over?

It was ten o'clock when we arrived at the Abbey of St. Peter at Westminster. In Westminster Hall were assembled a large company of the principal barons and gentlemen of the kingdom, with the archbishops and bishops in their gorgeous state robes. Between the hall and the abbey, the path by which the king would have to walk was covered over with richest scarlet cloth; a band of men, consisting of the retainers of the principal lords, dressed in their handsome liveries, with the family badges on the breast, lined the way on either side, whilst the lords themselves within the doors of the hall stood ready to receive the king, and to conduct him into the abbey.

"Now then, mind what you do, I say!" I heard shouted behind me; and my attention being at once attracted to the direction from which the voice came, I saw Oswald, whose faculty for getting into mischief was perfectly marvellous, struggling with a burly man full six feet high, who was holding him back from pressing into the inclosed space. Somebody had complained that Oswald had elbowed him too roughly, which complaint Oswald answered by justifying the charge; and his opponent, a big smith who did not deign to strike a lad, revenged the affront by throwing my friend's cap into the inclosure. It was in pursuit of his cap that he came foul of the guard, who utterly declined to listen to his demand to be allowed to pursue his own property.

"What a plague do you mean by getting into this hobble?" I cried. "Leave well alone, man, and don't earn yourself a lodging in the Gatehouse, for you'll find the key you spoke of this morning won't unlock prison gates at Westminster, at all events."

"He's got my cap," said Oswald, "and I'll make him give it

up." And so saying, Oswald fastened himself anew, like a young bulldog, on to the man who had offended him.

The struggle was not of long duration, for the guard griped the arm and shoulder of poor Oswald in an iron grasp, dragged him off his legs, and then shook him to the ground. Whilst Oswald, thoroughly convinced of the imbecility of his attempt, was picking himself and his dignity up from the mud, his conqueror good-naturedly skewered the cap, which lay on the centre of the scarlet cloth, with the top of his pike, and flinging it to Oswald, bade him beware how he hit one who was not of his own size.

Presently there was a howl sent up from the men all along the guarded line, and a shoving about of sticks and weapons ensued, as if they had been possessed with evil spirits. A dog had done what Oswald had failed to do, and had broken into the space where Majesty was alone to figure. In spite of the yells and hootings which the men raised, by way of amusement more than anything else, the dog proceeded up the line, dodging the missiles and the sticks which were sent at him, till he came near the spot where we were standing. A short, sharp bark, which I fancied I recognised, drew me to notice the creature more particularly, and in him I discovered, to my great astonishment, my own hound Brush. He had slipped his chain somehow or other in the stable-yard, and set out to take his share in the sports of the day as well as we. He had tracked me up through the streets to Westminster Hall, and now, having forced a passage out of the scarlet place, stood beside me with eyes glistening, mouth open, and tongue hanging down, wagging his tail with intensest delight at having once more found his master.

Very soon after these little incidents occurred, the king arrived at the hall, and preparations were at once made for taking him to the church. The clergy, abbots, and prelates led the way, followed by the great officers of the crown in their robes of state; then came the king, walking under a canopy of blue silk, which was supported on silver spears, carried by the barons of the Cinque Ports. With the clergy, in the front part of the procession, were the choir of the abbey, and as they moved on to the

abbey gates they sang a beautiful antiphony in honour of St. Peter, to which was added by way of special prayer this canticle: "O God! who regardest the lowly-minded, who consolest us humble, with the greatness of thy mercy, grant to thy servant our king thy tender grace, that through him we may feel thy presence amongst us;" and so singing they passed into the church.

There the mass being celebrated, and an address given by the Archbishop of Canterbury to the people, the king took the coronation oath.

Standing before the high altar whereon the mass had been offered, Richard, at the instigation of the primate, swore: "That he would permit the Church to enjoy her privileges, and would reverence her and her ministers; that he would true faith keep, and in all places set his face against rapacity and iniquity of all sorts. Secondly, that he would cause to be observed the good laws of the land, especially those of St. Edward, king and confessor, who lay at rest in that very church; and that he would subvert all bad laws. Thirdly, that he would be no acceptor of persons, but would give true justice between man and man; especially that he would be mindful of mercy, even as he himself hoped for mercy from the clement and pitiful God."

This being done, the archbishop demanded of the people if they would have Richard for their king. Loud shouts and salutations declared their assent, and the crown was placed on the young boy's head. Then came the investing with the sword of state, the armlets of sincerity and wisdom, the pall, the ring emblematical of the Catholic religion, the sceptre of dominion, the wand of truth and equity, and, finally, the enthroning.

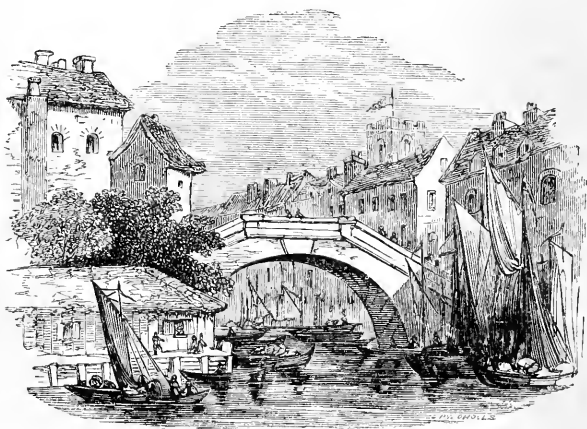
We, who had been standing on the outside steps of the church, waiting for the coming of the stately party from within, were surprised, towards the end of the time fixed for their advent, to see, prancing up upon a magnificent milk-white charger, a knight clad in complete armour, and preceded by his two esquires bearing his lance and shield. Advancing to the door of the abbey, he raised the beveur from before his face, and in a loud voice challenged the whole realm to deny the right of Richard to be king,

at the same time flinging his glove upon the ground, for any one who listed to pick up.

No one, however, was present who seemed disposed to enter on the quarrel, and Sir John Dymmok—for so he was called—had no need but to turn his rein and ride home again.

Whilst he was at this work, the new king and his nobles came out of the church and fared forth into Westminster Hall, where earls and knights were to be created, other honours conferred, and a great banquet given to those who were at the court.

We, having no entrance there, but having seen thoroughly what we desired, began to think of turning our steps homeward, and as we went eastward, that happened on the way which shall be related in the next chapter.



Fleet Bridge.

CHAPTER XI.

WE MEET WITH AN ADVENTURE, AND HAVE TO VISIT LUDGATE.

"He was to weete a stout and sturdy thiefe,
Wont to rob churches of their ornaments."

Faerie Queene.

"Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn, but
I shall have my pocket pick'd?"

Henry IV.



THE clock had struck two when we quitted the abbey-yard on our return home. Brush was with us, jumping and frisking on every side, and looking defiant of every dog he met.

We had not gone far beyond the White Friars Church in Fleet Street, when a stranger, apparently a foreigner, stopped us, and asked the way to the house of John of Ypres, which he said he had been told lay near the Erber in Dowgate.

There was something in the look and manner of the man which made me hold off from him as soon as he spoke to me. His overhanging eyebrows, thin hooked nose, thin lips, fringed with a shaggy moustache, and his restless glistening eyes, his face bearing marks of exposure to weather, and down the left cheek signs of an old sword-cut, made up a countenance that was not pleasing. Brush did not seem to be any more taken in his favour than I was, for as soon as the stranger stopped us, Brush uttered a low growl, which now and again broke out into the sharp note of a bark as the man moved his eyes from us to the dog. Presently Brush began jumping up at the man, endeavouring to rend his cloak with his teeth, and to give other signs of canine ill-will, so much so that I, who knew the dog to be a good discerner between

friends and foes, involuntarily stepped back a pace when I noticed his action.

“Down, Brush!” I said; “come to heel, sir!” for I thought it not unlikely he might fix his teeth in the man’s leg; and when the dog had unwillingly obeyed my order, I answered as civilly as I could that we were going in the direction of the Erber, and if he chose we would bear him company.

We walked on to the bottom of Fleet Street, and over the bridge towards Ludgate, conversing of the event which we had witnessed that day, when the stranger proposed we should take a cup of wine together at the Pomegranate, the tavern which stands at the corner of Pilgrim Place. He was beholden to us, he said, for guiding him on his way, and would be glad if we would oblige him by taking a friendly drink with him.

Before I had time to excuse us, which I would gladly have done, or to suggest that we should go to the Golden Lion in Pater-noster Row, where I was well known, Oswald and Archdale both chimed in their thanks to the stranger, and said they were thirsty as fishes, and would willingly be indebted to him for a draught.

The man expressed his satisfaction with a smile that made his sinister face look doubly dreadful, and almost made me draw back even then. It seemed, however, unreasonable as well as churlish to refuse a civility for no other reason than because the man’s looks were not quite prepossessing, so I overcame my scruples as being uncharitable things, and with my companions stepped from the causeway into the tavern.

I fancied—but dismissed the thought as a fancy only—that I detected a glance of intelligence between the taverner and our entertainer as we passed the former in the passage of the house; and I could not reconcile in my own mind the alleged ignorance of the latter as to his way to Dowgate, with his evident signs of familiarity with the rooms of this house. However, I kept my own counsel, and determined to be on my guard.

The tavern was not one that had a very good name, although nothing certain was known against it. The better sort of citizens did not use it, but foreigners resorted thither, and as foreigners

were not in good odour, so neither was their house of call. It was an old building, having low, small, and dark rooms, which were entered from narrow passages equally gloomy. Cleanliness was a stranger there, and in the hot July day when we made acquaintance with the place, the smell of stale mead and ale came out strongly from the wooden benches and settles, which were imbued with spilt liquors. There was a comfortless appearance about the room which we entered that repelled me; but I thought, " 'Tis no matter, we shall be here but a minute;" and chiding myself for being over-nice and squeamish, I went over to the cold hearth, and stood there waiting.

The stranger ordered four beakers of spiced hippocras to be served, and having removed his hat, and thereby disclosed a second deep scar extending from the hair on the middle of his forehead to the right eyebrow, begged us to be seated.

He was dressed in a suit of what had once been brown, but the colour had faded by long use into a variety of hues. The cut of his clothes was not English; he wore a long Spanish sword in a plain black leather belt; his face and manner bespoke the foreigner, and but for his easy fluency with the English tongue, I should have taken him for a Spaniard or an Italian. He was an Englishman, however, as he told us, and his name was Gilbert D'Arcy; and he began to tell us freely of his history, and as he did so he succeeded in removing somewhat of the bad impression he had at first made upon me. Still, as a matter of caution, I resolved to keep on my guard, for, with all his suavity and graceful talk, I could not get rid altogether of the instinctive repugnance I had before felt for him.

Oswald and Archdale eagerly drank in every word D'Arcy spoke, and when, he having been long in speaking, the beakers were drained, Archdale insisted on our treating the entertaining stranger.

D'Arcy told us how he had from his sixteenth year followed the profession of a soldier, that he was made to join the army at the time when the late king set out to prosecute his claim to the crown of France, and had been at Crécy when the Prince of

Wales charged upon the Genoese bowmen and cut his way out from the midst of a swarm of knights who thought to hem him in. He had been at Calais, and seen John de Vienne—the same who had recently burned the town of Rye—coming from the town, which he had defended for twelve months, with fifteen knights and the six burgesses, to lay the keys of the place at King Edward's feet ; and he had been present when Queen Philippa obtained her request that the lives of the prisoners should be saved. Then he told us of the "Great Death" which swept Europe in 1349, how many thousands of people died in the course of six months, and that even the beasts caught the disease and died by scores. "'T was said at the time," added D'Arcy, "that the pestilence was sent because of God's anger at the extravagant dresses of the people, which perhaps may be a reason why I escaped it." And as he said this he looked with a grim smile at his own well-worn garments.

He had been at Poitiers, and with Prince Edward when he took King John prisoner, and he had been in London when King Edward publicly entertained the Kings of France and Scotland, who were his captives at the same time. He had been dismissed from the service at the Peace of Bretigni, and had then served as ancient to Sir John Hawkwood in the White Band of the Free Companies. With him he had been at Avignon when Du Guesclin frightened the Pope out of 200,000 livres, and snapped his fingers, or something like it, when the Pope expressed his wish to excommunicate the whole pack. He had served in the campaign against Don Pedro the Cruel, and received the cut which was visible on his left cheek at the scrimmage in which Don Pedro was slain by his own brother Enrique. He had afterwards served under Hawkwood in Italy, and, being a soldier of fortune, had changed sides as often as his general. He was now, as he said, tired of war, and had come home to seek an honest living in some other way ; but what that other way might be did not appear.

Presently he began to tell us of the habits of the different nations he had seen—of the tricks the Italians played, the vengeful nature of the Spaniards, the universal knowledge the French had

in the ways of evil, and how Flemings would drink beer "till they were as red as cocks and only a little wiser than their combs."

He insisted on being allowed the honour of providing more drink for us, and the landlord, who had come into the room whilst D'Arcy had been talking, was invited to join us.

My suspicions of the man had worn off considerably, and in spite of Brush, who lay on the floor beside me and never once had taken his eyes off D'Arcy's face, I began to think I had been wanting in charity to accuse a man upon no sufficient ground, when D'Arcy, with a look towards the taverner which was twin look to that which had before set me on my guard, offered to show us a trick or two which he had seen practised in Florence. Without waiting for assent, he produced some dice from his pouch and threw them on the table before him.

"Now," said he, "the two aces shall come down!"

Rattle went the dice in the box which the taverner reached him, and down came the dice, showing a deuce and a cater.

"Plague upon them!" said D'Arcy, "that Florentine fellow used to throw them, and I fancied I had got the knave's trick of jerking them. Let's try again." And so saying, he rolled the dice once more, and down they came, but not showing the aces as he prophesied.

"There's no trick at all in it," said Archdale, who had been watching the man, "or if there be, you've no knowledge of it."

"Well, it *does* seem so," answered D'Arcy, "but 't is a knowledge one is better without. Will you wager me a half-noble I don't succeed this time?"

"Yes," said Archdale; "there's no trick in it at all." And he put a half-noble on to the table to abide the roll of the dice.

Again the dice rattled and came down, and D'Arcy lost his money to Archdale.

"I'll wager you a noble you don't do it now, Master Confidence!" said the taverner, for D'Arcy still maintained his mode of shaking was right. This time also he lost, and still he persevered.

"Two nobles I do it this time," cried D'Arcy, who had lost but a noble and a half on the previous play.

"Done!" said Archdale; and down came the dice showing the two aces. The nobles passed over to D'Arcy, and he again went on with varying success, but invariably winning upon the higher stakes.

Archdale had lost on the whole several nobles, Oswald had lost all the money he had in his pocket, and the taverner had lost a little, but only a little. I had declined to wager up to this time, but being rallied by D'Arcy—upon whose face the same restless, anxious expression I had noticed when he first spoke to us had again come—and urged by Archdale "just to try my luck," and further urged by my own desire to test the truth of my observation, I now agreed to play.

The first two throws were winners for me, and the third, on which was staked double what I had gained, won for D'Arcy. He was about to pick up the dice for the fourth throw, when I put my hand over them, and said,

"These dice are loaded."

"Fool!" said D'Arcy, as his face grew a shade paler than before, "have you not won even now with these very dice twice running? and now, because you lose a higher stake, you accuse me of having loaded dice."

The taverner began to murmur, and to hustle me from my place. Even Archdale and Oswald declared it was impossible, but I stuck to my hold on the dice which were on the table, and, taking no notice of my comrades' remarks, said boldly to D'Arcy,

"You have another pair of dice: these are loaded and those are not, and you use either, the one or the other according to your admirable discretion;" and, making a dash with my other hand at the box, I shook the other pair of dice out on to the table.

This act was rewarded immediately by a heavy blow between the eyes, which made me see a thousand stars flitting before me, and caused me to reel backwards against the wall of the room; but, ere D'Arcy had time to follow up his attack with a second

blow, the faithful Brush flew at his throat, and fell with him heavily to the ground.

The taverner, thinking I had had my *quietus*, rushed at Oswald, who was nearest to him, with a large meat-knife which he snatched off a tressel ; but before he could do more harm than excite his own desire for blood, Archdale's sword had been whipped out of its scabbard, and found a new sheath in the taverner's shoulder. The cries of D'Arcy—to whom Brush clung in spite of the most strenuous efforts of his victim to get rid of him—the uproar which ensued in the general *mêlée*—for the servants and the taverner's wife had now joined the scene—attracted the attention of the passing watch, and, in a few minutes from the time I had charged D'Arcy with cheating, we were all in safe custody of the municipal guard. I called Brush, who had nearly killed D'Arcy, to let go his hold. D'Arcy, from the grasp of the dog, fell into that of Master Constable. The taverner, in spite of his protestations and the entreaties of his wife, was forced to go with his wounded shoulder undressed with the same inexorable officer, and we three, notwithstanding Oswald's brag in the morning about our freedom from arrest, were also marched off by the civic guard ; and, as it was too late to take us before the magistrates that day, we were all locked up in the safe keeping of Ludgate till the following morning.



CHAPTER XII.

WE ARE RELEASED, BUT OUR FRIENDS THINK IT DESIRABLE WE SHOULD HAVE CHANGE OF AIR—BARNES AND I ACCOMPANY ARCHDALE TO HASTINGS.

“Dress’d in a little brief authority.”

Measure for Measure.



EARLY on the morning after our arrest we underwent a very searching examination before the chief of the guard, who professed a desire to know something of the nature of the charge against us before he took us to the magistrate himself. Whether this were truly the object he had in view, or whether he wished us to be impressed with a

sense of his authority, I know not ; but he sadly failed to inform himself about the facts of our case. With much ceremony, and frequently reminding us of the exalted character of his office, he thrust us into the small room over the gateway which he used as his own.

We had passed the night in a most comfortless place, in company with a number of prisoners arrested by the guard for various

offences committed in the crowd at the coronation. There were thieves, cutpurses, rascals of all descriptions crowded into the small den where we were confined. Dirty straw to lie on, but not space enough to stretch one's self upon it. A pestilent atmosphere, a noisy crowd of unwashed scoundrels, and a hot evening in the height of summer. No threats or entreaties could prevail upon our gaoler to put us in better quarters. Overnight he was too much intoxicated to listen to reason. It was a positive relief when he summoned us, with a voice that was intended to inspire dread, to his presence in the examination-room.

Having us, disarmed as we were, guarded as though we had been taken in the act of killing the king, Abel Givas bade us prepare ourselves for the worst.

"You have committed a crime," said he, "more horrible than suicide or larceny; you've broken the peace of our lord the king, and 't will go hard with you but you'll swing at Smithfield Elms for it."

This terrible announcement, which included us all in the same condemnation, though made with much lifting of the eyebrows, swaying of the mouth, and in a voice somewhat unsteady after last night's potations, not seeming to have the desired effect of killing us with fright, Abel Givas began to examine us after a fashion entirely his own. First of all he would have it 't was I who began to use the dice; and, having severely reprehended me for my imputed sin, he fell to moralizing about the early depravity of youth, asked me had I not seen the proclamations of his late Majesty, now in heaven, against the "damnable art of dicing," and finished his lecture with a number of anecdotes of his own early doings, which, if true, showed that he himself must nearly have escaped grace.

On my protesting again and again—for I knew not how much power the constable really had, and could not get rid of a dim notion that our heads might in another hour's time go to increase the number of ornaments over the gate at London Bridge—that I was not the dicer who had caused all this trouble, he called me a "naughty varlet" and a "detestable gallows-bird," with many

more names equally odious, till I knew not how to endure it any longer, and, despite the visions of swinging halters and headspikes that floated before my eyes, I bade him hold his tongue from using such words, or I would inform Master Walworth my friend, and my master, Master Philpot, who would have him turned out of his post.

The constable was silent for a moment, and I, thinking him to be surprised at the mention of these names, at once followed up my advantage by telling him that he had been drunk the night before, and that, unless he changed his behaviour, I would report that also.

The shaft hit home, and Abel, suspecting there might be some truth in what I said, ordered the chain to be removed from my hands and the hands of my companions, and was just turning the full flood of his eloquence upon the really crestfallen D'Arcy, when the door of the room opened, and Master Philpot himself came in.

"What is the meaning of all this?" said my master, as he scanned the faces of those in the apartment, and in a voice which, though it could not help being kind, was on this occasion a little stern. "I thought better of you," he said, as he saw me about to speak. "This is the second time in seven days *you* have given me pain, Oswald," he said, as he caught the eye of that poor lad, half-melted at the sorrow he saw he was giving his master. "Of you, Archdale, I know not much, but I trusted Hamo de Offington's yeoman better than to imagine he would have led two lads like these astray. These men I do not know. Who are they?"

Abel, who now saw that we were whom we had represented ourselves to be, and that our master was no other than Master John Philpot, a magistrate and alderman, began to be as fawning and cringing as before he had been bullying. He commenced to frame excuses for us, and vehemently to accuse D'Arcy and the taverner, when the former, rousing himself from the dogged humour in which he had hitherto remained, and throwing off the hang-dog look which had before made him look so repulsive, pushed back the obtrusive Abel Givas, and proceeded to give

Philpot a true and plain account of the whole affair. He admitted having led us to the inn for the very purpose of making us lose money to him at the dice; confessed to having cheated Oswald and Archdale, and to his design upon me; told how I had discovered his fraud, his anger and shame at the discovery, the blow he hit me, the uproar that ensued, and all the facts up to the present time. He ended by asking Master Philpot to exonerate us, and to deal with him and the taverner—who confessed to having known of D'Arcy's plot—as leniently as he could.

This unexpected conduct on the part of D'Arcy astonished us as much as it pleased Philpot. It was a source of pleasure to him, which gave signs of its presence on his face, to find that we were so much clearer in the matter than he had at first supposed, and it was evident that he was inclined to deal as gently as he could with the delinquents.

His examination of D'Arcy elicited the facts of his previous life as he had narrated them to us, and which turned out indeed to be true. These considered, it was rather a marvel to think that so much goodness should have remained in one who had been in such scenes and with such men, as to make him shield us in a matter concerning which, but for him, it would have been difficult to prove us clean, than that he should have practised some of the evil tricks upon us that he had learned in such lawless company. He had been hardly treated by the world, upon whom he had made war, and at the time he met us was in the direst want. So that, although, as Master Philpot told him, these facts did not in any manner excuse his fault, they might lawfully influence him in measuring out the punishment for it. For the taverner, who was a notorious aider of ruffians, there was no excuse, and Master Philpot ordered him to be twice whipped and to be kept in prison for four weeks. D'Arcy he ordered to be imprisoned for four days, and bade him at the end of that time come to him.

The man seemed grateful for treatment which his conduct had not really deserved, and we, with hearts much lighter than we could boast of an hour ago, followed our good master down the narrow stair of the gate, and walked out free once more into the

street. At the door of the prison we were joined by a friend to whom we entirely owed our speedy deliverance—no other than our dumb friend Brush.

On the preceding evening he had stayed with us until we were removed within old Givas's custody, and then, being refused admittance to the place where we were confined, he ran home to make known what he could as to our whereabouts. His strange behaviour, coupled with our absence, had excited the attention of the servants, and, although they succeeded in fastening him up, and prevented him having the access he sought to Master Philpot's room, he had not failed, in spite of curses and blows, to draw that good man's notice to him by his moaning and barking all the night long. Early next morning he had found means to escape from his chain and to get to Master Philpot's room. Alice's attention he had also implored by jumping up at her in a gentle way, and then running a little distance off, looking round the while to see if she were following him, and, when she did not, making the most doleful cries. When Master Philpot opened his door to receive the cup of claret which his daughter brought him as soon as she was abroad o' mornings, Brush intruded himself into the room, and by his restless way and unwonted behaviour so much excited Philpot's curiosity that he determined to discover the cause of the dog's disquiet. Dressing himself, therefore, as speedily as possible, Philpot, who now knew we had not been at home all night, suffered the dog to lead him, and following him down the street, Brush impatiently giving him time to get over the ground, came to the door of the place where we lay. Standing stock-still at the gate, and looking up into Philpot's face with an intelligence which conveyed by glances what it would have spoken, Brush brought our master to our relief.

He bounded home with us as if he were on springs for this occasion only, taking no notice of other dogs, so absorbed was he in the joy of seeing us again.

After receiving the upbraidings of Alice for our misbehaviour, and feeling really sorry for having through our thoughtlessness upset for a time the comfort of a whole household, we sat down

to breakfast in old Margaret's kitchen. Whilst I was endeavouring to clear myself in the mind of Alice—who only knew that we had been sent to prison, and thought everybody must be naughty who was sent there—Archdale had to endure being talked at by Margaret, who looked upon him as the cause and source of the whole mischief, and, with the impression which his eating powers had made upon her a few hours before still fresh, maintained in audible tones her belief that gluttony and dicing were kindred vices.

Having converted Alice to a better way of thinking of me, and Archdale having ate through Margaret's pasties and her lecture, we prepared to obey a summons from our master, who sent to say he wished to see us as soon as we had taken breakfast.

Up we went, therefore, into the warehouse, where Master Philpot was engaged in dictating a letter which a scrivener was writing for him.

We waited till he could speak with us, when he took us aside, and thus said:

"I am not altogether sorry for what has happened to you, although I could wish your adventure had come in a more reputable fashion. You were wrong to play at the dice at all, but I am assured you played without intending to do wrong. You, Hubert, acted as your father would have done, and I thank you in his name (the saints be with him!) for so doing. You exposed a cheat, and played the part of a man. But I have been thinking over the matter, and have resolved you shall for a time leave London. Others may not look at it in the way I do, and 't is as well you should not be open to the risk of taunts, nor be within the possibly evil influence of D'Arey, of whom I intend to see more.

"My answers to Hamo de Offyngton are ready, and you will prepare, Archdale, to carry them back. You, Hubert and Oswald, will accompany Master Archdale, and will be the servants for a season of the Abbot of Battle. I have written to him about you. Farewell, and God bless you."

Though the warning was rather sudden, we did not hesitate to

obey, and, embracing the good man who acted so generously towards us, we hastened to get ready for the journey.

That same afternoon we quitted London—I on Carrow, who was overjoyed at getting once more into the country, Archdale on the horse he had ridden into the town, and Oswald on a neat gelding which his father had provided for him, and of which he seemed justly proud. Brush, of course, accompanied us.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE ABBOT OF BATTLE.

"He yave not of the text a pulled hen,
That saith that hunters ben not holy men,
Ne that a monke when he is rekkeles
Is like to a fish that is waterles;
This is to say, a monk out of his cloistre:
This ilke text held he not worth an oistre."

CHAUCER—*Canterbury Tales.*



WE rode but sixteen miles that night, and lay at Farnborough, continuing our journey on the following morning. Archdale, who knew the road thoroughly, beguiled the time, if he did not begloom it, with stories and legends attached to the different spots we passed. Here in this copse Sir Eustace Donne was found stabbed through the heart by a peasant whose family he had outraged; there, in the time of William I., who "loved the tall stags as if he had been their father," were hanged the seven men of Surrey who went forth to shoot a deer; in this narrow turn of the road, where two men could with difficulty ride abreast, the Devil had appeared to the Abbot of Chertsey, after he had shriven the dying lord of Byfleet, and made him, for his soul's health and gain of Holy Church, leave his large property in frankalmoign, to the ruin and distress of the Lady Eleanor and her children. Farther on in the bend were the marks of the Devil's claws (a natural fissure in the rock by the wayside), which he dug into the ground as he winced at the Abbot's "*Benedicite!*" and near to the place was a hole in the rock, called the Abbot's Gate, through which the Devil is said to have gone with the churchman on the latter's final refusal to give up his plunder. Will knew all the signs and omens of birds, what two rooks por-

tended, and what was to be expected when an owl hooted in the daytime. If his horse overreached, or was found to have speedycut, he knew the interpretation and the whole meaning of the accident. His tales and sayings, and our capital spirits, served to keep us from feeling greatly the length of the journey, which towards the end of the second day began to get somewhat dreary. Before we reached our destination we were favoured with an incident which might have had a very different ending than that we desired, and have prevented our attaining to Battle at all.

We had quitted the last town of any consequence that remained to be passed, and had got within the shade of Darvel Wood, not more than three miles from the abbey, when Oswald, who was slightly in front, drew his rein, and, pointing to a dark clump of foliage about fifty yards ahead of us, told us he had seen two dark figures moving there.

"Holy St. Mary protect us!" said Archdale, crossing himself, "this is the wood where the black headless hare runs. There are spirits and phantoms here as numerous as the noble army of martyrs."

And again crossing himself, Will Archdale muttered a prayer, half holy, half charm, which his nurse had taught him with his earliest prattle.

But Will Archdale, though very superstitious, and believing thoroughly in all the incredible stories he told to us, was the very reverse of a coward; and when I, impatient of such stuff as the headless hare nonsense, and trusting implicitly to Oswald's eyesight, which I knew to be good, bade Will look out for something material in the shape of man, he expressed an earnest wish that I might be right, as he much desired to test the temper of the new sword which Master Philpot had given to him at the same time that he gave one to Oswald and to me.

I insisted on going first, bidding my companions come on to my support in case of my being attacked. This I did because I mistrusted Archdale's imagination, which would only allow of his muscles acting when there was something visibly before them to work upon.

Riding at a smart trot, my feet well home in the stirrups, my knees and calf muscles firmly gripping Carrow, the reins short in my left hand, and my drawn sword in my right, I came up to the spot which Oswald had pointed out. It was in a dark part of the road, where the opposite trees intertwined their boughs, forming a sort of natural avenue. The night was unusually dark for August. All circumstances seemed to favour intending mischief-makers. Just as I rode up, four men ran out from the cover at the side. Two of them seized Carrow's bridle, and the other two bade me dismount and give up my money. Before I had time to comply with either demand, even if I had had a mind to do so, one of the ruffians aimed a blow at my head with a long poleaxe with which he was armed.

Happily for me, at that moment Carrow plunged violently and swerved half round; the poleaxe came down betwixt my face and her neck, and spent its blow harmlessly on the pommel of my saddle. Guided by instinct rather than judgment—for I was confused by my novel situation—I swung my sword round, and delivered a blow with all my strength upon my assailant's neck and shoulder. The man staggered and reeled into the hedge, bleeding terribly; and before opportunity offered for me to think or do more, Archdale's sword had found a way into the ribs of another of our enemies. The two men at Carrow's head let go their hold and lay sprawling in the road, and within less than five minutes from the time I was brought to a stand we were congratulating ourselves upon a complete victory.

Archdale, from whose brain this little brush had driven all ideas of ghosts, was considering the propriety of taking the wretches prisoners into the abbey, when the sound of hoofs rattling over the hard road behind warned us to beware of any increase to the numbers against us, so, clapping spurs to our horses, we galloped off, and did not draw rein till we clattered up to the gate of the noble Abbey of Battle.

It was past nine o'clock by the time we were housed, our horses cared for, and ourselves seated at a plentiful supper in the kitchen of the abbey; but the abbot, to whose presence Archdale

was admitted as soon as his arrival was known, insisted on seeing us and bidding us welcome to Battle.

Hamo de Offyngton was as handsome and well-made a man as there was to be found in Sussex. In height he stood some five feet eleven inches, was broad shouldered, with a large head, and full, intelligent face. His hair, which was scanty on the top of his head, was of a grizzled black, his eyes dark hazel, nose straight and regular, mouth small, and hidden in the fine beard which covered his upper lip and chin.

He was dressed in a long loose robe of black serge, confined at the waist by a broad belt of fine leather. The sleeves of the robe were full, and hung down from the elbows, but the forearm sleeve was tightly fitting, having at the cuff a narrow band of finest lawn.

As he received us in his oratory that night, and told us in generous but dignified way that we were most welcome under his roof, inquired of Master Philpot and his household, and spoke kindly of ourselves, and of the interest which already he took in us, I could not but feel a most strong liking for the man. He reminded me not unpleasantly of my dear father.

The tastes and pursuits of the abbot were indicated in his room. On the walls were hung heads of stag, fox, and boar; antlers which once had bruised the trees of the neighbouring forests; hunting-spears, spurs, horns, and other implements of the chase; falcons' hoods and jesses, hawking-gloves, and a multitude of things necessary to an indulgence in field sports.

The abbot was clearly one of those

“Who yave not of the text a pulled hen,
That saith that hunters ben not holy men;”

and yet, as was then evident, and as I found out by experience afterwards, he was certainly not of those who for love of venery neglect the graver studies, nor of those who for love of *anything* neglect that which it is their duty to do.

On the table before him lay several manuscripts, which he had been studying before we came in. A large and beautiful copy of

the Holy Bible, which must have occupied the time of several monks for many years to make, was open on a reading-stand at his side, while in his hand he held the letter which Master Philpot had caused to be written to him the day before. This mixture of study and skilled pleasure, of which we saw the signs, was a fair index to the abbot's character. None so scrupulous as he in the performance of all the duties of his station, none so keen a lover of legitimate recreation when those duties were discharged or satisfied.

Once more bidding us welcome, and commending us to the care of one of the monks into whose charge he gave us, the Abbot of Battle wished us a good night's rest, telling us not to forget before we slept to return thanks to God and St. Mary for having preserved us from the perils and dangers of which he had heard an account from Archdale.

A ride of fifty miles, and the reaction consequent upon the excitement the day had afforded us, gave our eyelids ample excuse for being heavy. It was, therefore, with a hearty good will that we accepted Father Ambrose's invitation to follow him to our dormitory, where, after obeying with earnest heart the abbot's last injunction to rest and be thankful, we fell into a sound sleep which lasted till next day's sun was high in the heavens.



CHAPTER XIV.

THE ABBOT TAKES US TO FLY HIS NEW HAWKS—A MESSAGE FROM WINCHELSEA.

“The good old rule
Sufficeth them : the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.”

WORDSWORTH.

AS soon as we had risen and attended matins in the abbey church, we joined the brethren at breakfast in the refectory—a large and handsome room adjoining the church. Carrow’s wants I had, of course, supplied, as my custom was, with my own hands; and when, after we had been treated to a view of the abbey buildings, admired the splendid proportions of the noble pile, inspected the stables, seen the falcons, greyhounds, and other creatures, with whom Brush at present did not seem disposed to be intimate, the abbot proposed to fly some new falcons, and offered to take us with him, our horses were nowise disabled by their fatigue of yesterday from bearing us afield. Carrow, indeed, came out of her stall with a brisk, fresh step and jaunty air which had the effect she doubtless desired of making her the admired of all beholders. The abbot was loud in his praises, and as he flattered himself, to use his own phrase, that he knew a horse from a jackass, I drank in the homage done to my favourite with the gratification one always has on receiving the approval of competent critics.

The abbot’s palfrey, called Battle, having been reared on the estate, was a serviceable animal, with good hind-quarters and strong loins, and well able to bear the weight of his rider, who yet

could not have been a very light burden. Archdale, who had re-entered on his duties as yeoman, was not with us, being occupied in setting the farm labourers to work.

Besides ourselves, the abbot was the only one of his party who rode. Five of the brethren, including Father Ambrose, who was his superior's favourite attendant, the two falconers, and a lad with a couple of greyhounds in a leash, made up our company.

I knew little or nothing about hawking. In the old time at Brooklet my father had kept a single bird, which he occasionally but rarely used. We had no place nor any means for carrying on so costly an amusement, so that it was with the additional pleasure which a new pursuit gives that I rode forth on this fair morning to fly a hawk with the Abbot of Battle.

The abbot's mews, where he kept his hawks, were attached to the stable buildings, and were substantially made of the best wood planking, painted of a grey colour. Over the entrance to them were nailed trophies of the inmates' prowess, in the shape of herons' wings, legs, and heads; and, by some rough artist, were portrayed beside them the likenesses of famous hawks now deceased who had won these *opima spolia*.

The mews themselves were contained in an airy building, attached, as I have said, to the stables. Inside they showed at a glance the greatness of the care which was bestowed upon their inhabitants. Cleanliness reigned supreme, and there was an orderliness in the arrangements which evidenced the presence of a master hand. Each bird had a separate perch and a separate stall, and on a small shelf in each stall were the hoods, lines, bells, and other accoutrements belonging to the particular occupant of the place.

Sixteen hawks were thus furnished with a lodging, and provided with the best of fare. Some of the meaner spirited among the brethren of the monastery were wont to say, when "blood ill-tempered" vexed them in respect of some self-denying ordinance which the abbot put out, that they were a long way worse off than the hawks; but Father Waldron, the dean of the choir, who heartily loved the gentleman's art of hawking, would reply

to such that if they were not so well tended, neither were they so useful or amusing as the hawks they envied. There were hawks of various kinds, and from the various places renowned for their excellent game birds—Breton and Flemish hawks two or three, but the greater part were of British breed, including five which hailed from the Isle of Man, and two that were Cornish.

The abbot, as was his wont, went round to each bird, with all of whom he seemed to be on terms of intimate friendship, said something to them, which they seemed to understand, and then began to question the falconer as to the health of his *protégés*—whether the grey falcon that flew on Tuesday was recovered of the blow it received from the quarry before that was killed; whether the foot of Biorn the Fleming was better for the medicaments which had been applied to it; and so through the list of the invalids.

“What is that film over Lanfranc’s eye?” asked the abbot, looking closely at the face of his favourite, which he had called after William I.’s Archbishop of Canterbury.

“Nought but a slight cold, my lord,” answered the man, who had already noticed the eye, which was dim in comparison of the flashing orb which seemed to cast out fire from the other socket of the bird.

“Have a care to bathe it with lukewarm water,” said the abbot, as concerned for the creature’s comfort as if it had been a human being; “and put Lanfranc into the corner stall yonder—’tis not so draughty. I would not lose that bird for a thousand marks.”

Lanfranc seemed to understand and appreciate the care thus bestowed upon him. He bent his head in token of acknowledgment, and then raised himself, and streaked his plumes as if to show that he thought the attention was not thrown away upon so fine a fellow, as indeed he was, with shoulders so broad that they seemed almost out of proportion with the rest of his body, strong talons that when stiff looked as if they were made of steel, a compact, well-shaped head, and a short, powerful beak, that might have been used to crack a flint.

The falconer removed him as he was ordered, and having made

the bird as comfortable as might be in his new quarters, inquired of Hamo de Offyngton what birds he would be pleased to fly that morning.

"We'll try the new pair of grey jerfalcons, which I bought of Sir Alured Dennis' man," said the abbot. "What do you think of them, Thomas?"

"Well, my lord," answered Thomas, who, not having had the buying of the birds, was not disposed overmuch to praise them, "they may do; but I never saw a falcon with nares like that big bird's got which was fit for much. Its train is good enough, and the sight seems quick, but with nares like that"—Thomas only shook his head and smiled pityingly, acting instead of saying how great a contempt he had for the purchase.

"So you don't think much of my judgment, Thomas?" said the abbot, who had himself seen and fancied the hawks, and bought them without reference to his own master falconer.

"Oh! I don't say that, my lord," replied Thomas, "for who does not know that your lordship's judgment is as good as any one's in all Kent, and better than most. It may be a fancy of mine, but a bird with nares like that"—here Thomas repeated the motion with his head, and left his master where he was in respect of knowing what, this purchase apart, the head falconer thought of his judgment.

"Well," said the abbot, "never mind, Thomas; I'll promise not to buy any more without asking your opinion first. I know you are the better judge, though it was reputed once that I could tell a hawk from a hernshaw."*

The necessary preparations were soon made for our morning's amusement. Thomas the falconer, with the help of the grooms and his own deputy, speedily clothed and hooded the two jerfalcons, and guarded their talons and fixed the lines; and while they were doing so the rest of us quitted the mews to mount our horses, which stood ready and impatient at the stable door.

"You can bring the hounds," said the abbot, as he settled him-

* *Hernshaw, i.e., a heron.*

self in his saddle, "but they must be in a leash, or they may spoil our sport by getting too far ahead."

A lad ran to execute this order, and then Thomas and the under falconer appeared, with the birds and their paraphernalia, ready to start.

Hamo de Offyngton, in spite of his sombre-coloured raiment, which was like to that he had worn on the previous evening, except that the long robe was changed for a short, tightly-fitting tunic, looked the very picture of comely manhood; and as one viewed his ample chest, broad shoulders, and muscular limbs, one could not help thinking he was a born warrior thrown away, whose office in church and monastery might have been better left to some less splendid specimen of the animal "man." But in thinking thus I reckoned without the taverner. It will very shortly be seen how that Hamo de Offyngton was especially in his right place.

With one of the grey jerfalcons on his wrist, the other being borne upon the tray which the under falconer carried suspended from his neck, the abbot led the way out of the abbey gate, and, followed by Father Ambrose and ourselves, took the direction of a small stream which ran through the meadows towards the sea, and the nearest point of which was little more than a mile from the abbey.

It was a lovely morning, almost too bright for our work—the air was full of the music of birds, the fields were yellow with the corn ripe for harvest, the sea shone like a mirror, from which our eyes gladly wandered to the relief afforded by the many tints of green which were on the clothing of the trees. A light breeze from seaward cooled the air, already hot with the heat of an August sun. The abbot and his falconer were dejected and hopeless that with such weather there would be any sport, but the former comforted himself with the reflection that we were at all events getting exercise, and sufficient excitement out of the expectation of game to keep us from wearying of our employment.

We had not gone beyond half a mile, and were riding slowly across a meadow that lay on the abbey side of the small stream, in

which, if anywhere, the abbot said we should meet a heron, when a shout from some one who was riding hard up the long slope on the top of which the abbey stands, attracted our attention.

Well-nigh breathless from the haste which he had used, the horseman rode up to where the abbot was, and told him he had ridden at fastest speed from Winchelsea to tell him that the French ships were hovering about the coast, and that some men had actually landed from one of the smaller ships. The fleet had come from the westward, he said, and it was doubted but that they had already made a descent upon the defenceless ports.

"This comes of my lord of Lancaster's delay to guard the seas!" exclaimed Hamo de Offyngton. "The upland men can find time to quarrel amongst themselves, to sit in judgment on their brethren, and to fool away both time and treasure upon costly pageants and coronation shows, but they will not stir themselves to defend the very vitals of the kingdom. 'Tis hard we churchmen should have to do this work for those whose place and duty it is to do it. But, God help me! these Frenchmen shall see I do not bear a sword in vain!" he added, as, pitching the falcon he had on his wrist to the falconer, he rode rapidly back to the abbey.

"How long is it since the French ships were seen?" he inquired.

"Three hours since, my lord," answered the messenger.

"And how far from the shore?"

"As near as could be guessed, about twelve miles."

"Have you any seaworthy ships in port, Master Hale?" pursued the abbot.

"None, my lord, but the Mary Rose, which has not men enough to take her out, and a few small pinnaces which I doubt could hold against the number of the enemy."

"If they are that distance off," said the abbot, dismounting at the door, at which we had now come, "they cannot do much with this tide. Go you back as fast as you came hither, bid the Winchelsea men be up and stirring, and do what they can till I come. Before three hours are over I'll be with them. Give this man a

fresh horse, some of you!" And so saying, the abbot walked into the house.

The Winchelsea man, being fresh mounted, was off, and by the time he had got a mile on his road the tenantry of the abbey, to the number of full five hundred, were hurrying up, some on horseback, but most on foot, to answer the summons of the great bell, which rang its warning notes in a loud, anxious key, audible by all the country for miles round.

As they came into the large courtyard they were marshalled by Archdale to their respective places, the mounted men together on the east side, next the church, those on foot in a body in the middle of the square.

Oswald and I went in to fetch our weapons, and, at Archdale's suggestion, to exchange our simple cloth caps for plain steel pots or morions. A few minutes served to complete our arrangements, and when we came out again we found the abbot already mounted and preparing to leave.

He, too, had made some alteration in his dress. He had donned a shirt of mail, which had done service for its master when Simon de Montfort slashed him across the body at Evesham, and which was none the less useful because time had rusted away some of its beauty. On his head he wore a steel basnet, which, to judge from the fashion of it, might have done duty with King Richard at Acre; gauntlets not more than sixty years old, and cuissarts made no later than the year of Poitiers—at which battle Geoffrey de Offyngton, the abbot's favourite brother, had died in them—completed the somewhat motley armament of the good man, who looked, as he sat on his palfrey at the head of his men, like the representative of successive ages of war. A long cross-handled sword, with a keen new blade, and an iron mace such as the Bishop of Beauvais might have carried, were the offensive arms of this grim apostle of the Church militant.

Having divided the tenants—who were supplied with weapons from the dining-hall of the abbey—into companies, and having in few words told them the object he had in calling them to arms, Hamo de Offyngton gave orders to Archdale to follow as quickly

as might be with the footmen; and smiling pleasantly as the armed men gave three lusty cheers by way of answer to his appeal to them, he put himself at the head of the mounted troop, some sixty strong, and rode out of the abbey in the direction of Winchelsea.

As was afterwards discovered, the Frenchmen, who were now off the coast, had come from the capture of the Isle of Wight, which they had seized rather by good fortune than design; for having been blown by a storm under the shore of the island, they succeeded in landing a few of their number, and these, not being opposed by the islanders, who thought to wait till more Frenchmen came, that they might seize a greater number of prisoners, were soon supported by so many of their comrades as to be an over-match for the Wight men.

The island fell into their hands, and they did much harm by killing the people, burning the villages, and destroying what they could not carry away. When they got to the castle at Carisbrook, they fancied they should have that also without much ado; but instead of getting it, they found there "a spur of incredible sharpness" in the shape of Sir Hugh Tirel, the keeper, who not only defended his castle from them, but came out and put a great number to the sword, so that they, "thinking it not good to dwell so near a serpent," gathered what spoil they could, made the islanders get 1,000 marks of silver from their friends and give to them, and compelling them to swear not to resist them whenever they might please to come to the island during a whole year, took to their galleys and came to Winchelsea.

In two hours from the time we left Battle our troop rode into the threatened town, of which the abbot at once assumed the command. Out in the bay, not many bowshots from the shore, lay the enemy in six vessels of fair size and two pinnaces. The largest, which bore the flag of Sir John de Vienne, was a fine carack of 250 tons, with pavises and targets along her sides, and with a raised castle at either end of her. On the forecastle was painted the figure of a lion, with the royal arms of France underneath it. From the castle on the afterpart floated the French

standard, and on a pole fixed a little in front of the mast was hoisted Sir John's own flag, while from the masthead fluttered a little pennoncel, which was meant to be the distinguishing flag of the ship herself. The others were all good-looking vessels, but smaller than the Lion, the smallest being of not more than thirty tons. There they lay floating with the tide, their sails not furled, but hanging in the buntlines, with the leeches drawn up close to the yard. This was done to slacken sail, but so as not to put the ships out of the power of using their triefs again at any moment. None but the Lion had bonnets to their sails, or, if they had, they were not fastened on. A pretty sight the ships presented, with the morning sun shining brightly upon them, and occasionally striking rays of light out of some moving helmet or fixed lance-head.

Whilst we stood watching them as they floated towards us, a boat was lowered from the deck of the carack, and a knight in complete armour got into it and was pulled towards the shore. As the boat came near, the knight stood up and made signs that he wished to speak with us, and the abbot—who, having made the best arrangements he could in the town, had now joined us—made him understand that he might come in safety.

A few more strokes with the oars and the boat's prow grated on the beach. One of our party ran down to catch hold of the stem, and the Frenchman nearest, having leaped out with a cord in his hand, made the boat fast by means of a small anchor. The knight then, with the help of the rowers, stepped out upon the shingle, and, advancing to where the abbot stood, inquired if he were the keeper of the town of Winchelsea.

"I keep it till you be gone," said our leader, "and hold it for the King of England against all comers; but when occasion does not demand my presence here, I serve the Abbey of Battle, of which I am head."

The knight bowed on hearing that the oddly-armed figure before him was none other than Hamo de Offyngton, of whom he had heard as being a good churchman and a valiant defender of the unguarded coasts.

"What is your business with me?" said the abbot; "and why do you affright our land with these unfriendly arms?"

"For your first question, reverend sir, I have an answer, but no commission to explain the matter in the second," answered the knight. "The most puissant knight, Sir John de Vienne, who awaits my return in yonder ship, has bidden me land and tell you that his mind is to be merciful and clement to the people of this place; that he desires not to fire your town and soak your fields with blood; and therefore he is willing to accept in lieu of pillage the sum of 2,000 marks of silver as the ransom of the place. Such is my message."

"And a bold one too, Sir Knight, by the Mass!" cried the abbot; "and a bold man you to bring it."

The Frenchman, deeming that this last expression implied a threat, put his hand to his sword, and stepped a pace or two back; but the abbot bade him be at his ease, for he was in the presence of a gentleman and not of an assassin; and then, speaking in a quiet and perfectly collected way, he said,

"I know not how many men you have in yonder ships, but, to judge from the size of them, you must be a goodly company. The strength I have at disposal here cannot amount to more than one-third of your number, but forgive me for saying so, it consists of Englishmen, not a few of whom have seen service under him to whom Sir John, your commander, gave up the keys of Calais. A further power is on its way hither, and cannot be long before it arrives. I shall head my men, and it will be for your master to judge whether Hamo de Offyngton is likely to shame his ancestors, of whose deeds I wot he knows well. I say not this, Sir Knight, by way of brag—God forbid!—but when you come here and talk of ransom for this town, I must tell you that it is not possible to redeem what was never lost; and I tell you frankly of my power, that you, seeing the hopelessness of your attack, may cease from molesting us who have never done you any harm."

As the abbot was ending his speech a loud shout was heard in the direction of the town, and, looking that way, we saw to our great joy Will Archdale, with the rest of the tenants of

the abbey, marching down with bills and bows towards the sea shore.

"You see my words are true," said the abbot, as he traced a sign of surprise on the Frenchman's face at the sight of these men, who, perhaps, he thought had no existence save in the imagination of him who had spoken of them.

"I do, reverend sir," answered the knight; "and since you refuse the offer I have made to you in Sir John's name, and seem disposed to dispute our entrance by force of arms, bragging yourself upon the *English* quality of your men, choose out two hundred of your best and trustiest, and let them meet a hundred of us upon this place, without unfair advantage, and let the ransom of the town abide the issue."

"You forget yourself, Sir Knight, and him to whom you address yourself," replied the abbot, frowning and colouring at the insult contained in the man's speech. "You must know your offer cannot be accepted, and 'tis a cheap taunt you make under cover of your safe conduct. However, in answer to it, tell your master that Hamo de Offyngton is a man of religion, unused to war, and hating it for its own sake; but that since his duty requires it, he holds the town of Winchelsea with sufficient force; that he means to defend it to the uttermost extremity; and the blood that may be spilt shall rest upon his head who, after this warning, shall be so hardy as to attack it."

The French knight bowed low as the abbot ended, and, thanking him for the courtesy he had exhibited towards him, with many protestations of gratitude went back to his boat.

What report he gave to Sir John de Vienne I know not, but, after flinging some large stone shots, which fell short of the land, out of some machine which we had observed to be standing on the topcastle of the Lion, the Frenchmen let down their sails from the clewlines and leechlines which held them, and, drawing their sheets home, stood out of the harbour in the direction of France.

We stayed at Winchelsea till a couple of hours after their last hull had disappeared from the horizon, and then went back to Battle Abbey.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MEN OF RYE FETCH THEIR BELLS OUT OF NORMANDY.

“Seeking the bubble reputation.”

As You Like It.

“He knew wel alle the havens, as they were,
Fro Gothland to the Cape de Finistere;
And every creke in Bretagne and in Spaine;
His barge yeleded was the Magélaïne.”

CHAUCER.



SEVERAL months now passed away without further molestation of the coast. Oswald and I remained, according to the purpose of Master Philpot, with the good Abbot of Battle, who had us taught the rudiments of necessary education, and while keeping strict discipline gave us every opportunity for improvement. Under the care of Father Ambrose, between whom and myself a great liking sprang up, I made considerable progress in studying the books which the abbey boasted. The writings of some of the Latin authors, especially the orations of Cicero and Caesar's history of his Western wars — these, and the *Confessions of St. Augustine of Hippo*, the *Art of Hawking*, and the *Whole Science of War*, were, with some of Master Chaucer's *Tales*, my favourite books. The Holy Bible in the Latin tongue was also well known to me, and so great an admiration and love did I come to feel for the beautiful things contained in it, that I much regretted it could not be written in English and read out to the common people, as Master Wyclif said it should be; only I did not venture to say this to any but Father Ambrose, who was also my confessor, for I knew how greatly the good abbot objected to anything like a departure from the rule of the Church. I had heard him on many occasions

condemn the doctrines which Master Wyclif held, and chiefly at this time, that plan of his for a translation of the Bible, which the abbot said would be nothing else than to throw the most costly pearls before the most beastly swine.

Oswald was not my companion in these studies. To him the confinement necessary to a pursuit of them was intolerably irksome, and he was more pleased to be delving with the workers in the fields, following the oxen at plough, or helping to gather shingle from the beach for the abbey garden. In hunting, and hawking, and shooting with the bow, and in the martial exercises which the abbot thought it no sin to have us taught, we were ever together, vyeing with one another in friendly rivalry.

Once or twice we had messages from our good friend Master Philpot, between the time Sir John de Vienne came and the happening of that which I am about to relate, and which occurred six months and better after that event. He sent us word of what was being done in London; how a Parliament had been held, in which many righteous acts had been done; how Alice Perrers, the evil woman who so shamelessly left King Edward in his dying hours, had been banished the realm; how the Earl of Buckingham, Lord Latymer, Lord Robert Fitzwater, and good Sir Robert Knollys had scoured the seas, and met with tempest and disaster at Sluys; and how Sir Hugh Calverly, who was Warden of Calais, had made a most valiant raid upon the town of Bulloin, and taken the French king's own barge, which lay in the port. He told us, too, of Alice, who was growing into "a bonny lass;" of D'Arcy, whom he had found to be better than first he seemed, and of whom more later on; of Margaret, old Peter Wall, and Peterkin his mischievous son; how the garden looked, and what he proposed to do with the waste ground in Gracechurch Street. Finally he told us, what we were not sorry to hear, that we must prepare to return within the next few weeks, as he was to be made lord mayor, and would need our services about him.

One morning I had been reading Julius Cæsar's account of his invasion of Britain, and comparing his minute description of the country with what I knew of it, smiling at the pitiable plight of

poor Titus Labienus, who, having been left at Calais to bring over the rear-guard, put to sea in his fine row-galley, and got caught when no more than half-way over the Channel by a north-easter, which blew him far away down the western coast, and, in spite of the fine speech that he made to the rowers, bid fair to send him into the unknown waste of waters, which yet have not been explored, but are said to abound in horrible watery cruelties. I had been admiring the pluck with which the strong-armed rowers plied their oars in such brave fashion that even the winds grew compassionate, and changed from adverse to favourable, and drifted them into the desired haven; and I had so interested myself in the struggle which had been made full fourteen centuries back, that I wished to try my fortune on the fickle water, and prove myself a worthy rival of these noble Romans.

The wish conceived, the tempter to gratify it appeared almost immediately in the person of Oswald.

He had been with Archdale on some errand of the abbot's to Rye, and whilst there had chanced to hear of a project which the Rye and Winchelsea men had got into their heads, and which was no more nor less than this—to pay off in kind, and at the earliest possible day, the debt which they had scored down to the French when Winchelsea was insulted some six months back, and when the town of Rye was made a heap of ruins, its citizens slain and captured, and the sweet church bells, which the whole countryside had loved to hear, were taken to Normandy to be jangled out of tune, and harshly to bemoan their own captivity.

Six months' freedom from annoyance, and a sense of disgrace resting upon the town, had spurred on the Rye folk to seek to wipe out the stain which they considered to remain upon them. In their neighbours of Winchelsea they found ready backers, so that when Master Ashford, of Rye, talked of a raid into Normandy, there was no lack of volunteers to man the Winchelsea boats and to sail for a common object with the men of Rye.

Now it happened that as Oswald and Archdale were about their business in the town, occasion led them to the very house where this notable project was being discussed, and not only so, but

arrangements were being made for carrying the plan into execution that very night. It is needless to relate here at length how the details were finally settled, but the proposals themselves—and it was as these were being put forward that my friends entered the house—were that the Winchelsea men should embark at six o'clock that evening in their best cogs and as many pinnaces as they could man, meet the Rye men, who were to be in their two cogs (lately repaired) and four good barges which had newly arrived from Dover. Master Ashford, well known as a most skilful shipman, and acquainted with all the creeks and havens on either coast, through an experience gathered in twenty years of a lodesman's life, was to have the command of the expedition; his ship was the *Sancta Maria*. Thomas Walters, crayer, of Winchelsea, was to be next in authority, and other good men and true were appointed to command the remaining boats. The destination was to be Peter's Haven, in Normandy, and the object the recovery of the stolen property.

"What will my lord abbot say to this?" said Archdale, as soon as the last speaker had finished. "He is warden of these ports, as you know, and I doubt his approval of such unauthorised war."

"Never fear," answered Ashford; "he'd not oppose it. At all events, he'll not reprehend it after it is done. Why, did not he himself come out when Winchelsea was threatened, looking for all the world like an ecclesiastical Goliath, or David belike, for I believe he won?"

"Yes, he did," replied Archdale; "but then he came to fight in the king's name, not in his own; and you remember how he told the knight he would defend the town, not attack the enemy, because, as he also said, he was a man of peace."

"That am not I, by God's bones!" cried Ashford; "and if his reverence be not informed of our intention I do not see what cause he can have to complain. The French came here without asking his permission, and why should we not visit them without it? They have run us deep in their debt, and as I am a man we will quit them."

"I wish with all my heart I might come with you," said Archdale.

"And who's to hinder you, man?" said Walters.

"The abbot," answered Archdale.

"But he need not know of it," chimed in another.

"Oh! his lordship's leave must be had first," rejoined Archdale, but in such a tone as suggested that he would be very much obliged to any one who would find him an excuse for going without it.

"It will spoil the whole thing," said Hale, the Winchelsea man who had brought the news of Sir John de Vienne's coming, when the descent was made on that place. "His lordship is certain not to suffer the expedition to sail if he knows of it beforehand. He'll wink at it after it comes back. Don't give yourself time to ask him. Stay here till six o'clock."

"But I have a message for him which must be delivered," replied Archdale.

"I'll take it," said Oswald, jumping up. "I have no call to ask the abbot's leave, and if you'll stay here I will ride to the abbey, give your message, say you are detained here, tell Hubert, and come back to you again; but on one condition," added my friend, preparing to go—"that you find room for Hubert and me in the boats!"

"Well said, youngster!" cried Ashford, smiling. "Now, Archdale, man, do not refuse a good offer. Take his message, lad, and we'll find room for you. It would be a pity to turn away such volunteers as you."

And so Archdale, albeit with some misgivings on the score of duty, allowed himself to be prevailed upon to stay. Oswald delivered the message, told the abbot, without stating the reason, that Archdale was detained for a time in Rye, and communicated his secret to me, the result being that, by half-past five in the afternoon, he, and I, and Brush, having stolen away from Battle, walked fully armed and brim-full of excitement into the place where the expedition was making ready for a start.

The little town of Rye was alive in all its parts. From every

house sounded the hum of preparation. Lights streamed forth from every lattice, and from the house doors, which, in spite of the coldness of the weather, stood open, for greater convenience of the flitters to and fro. Men, armed against both man and weather, strode through the street and went down towards the shore; women and children tugged ropes and spars, and other gear which were wanted for the boats; and on the little jetty, which stood out a short distance into the bay, were piled up stores of arms and equipments necessary to the furtherance of the Rye men's project.

A little way ahead of the pier were the vessels, looming in the dark night; and between them and the pier boats passed and repassed, conveying the stores and such men of the expedition as were ready to go.

Archdale had arranged for us to go in Ashford's ship, and accordingly, as soon as we arrived, we went on board the *Sancta Maria*. The night was bitterly cold, a raw February night, and we needed all the warmth not only of our thick furred cloaks, but of the kindly spirit contained in the big flask which Master Ashford called his "viaticum," a profane use of the term for which he duly received the rebukes of his loving friend the parson of the town. By six o'clock all the party were on board; by a quarter past the anchors were got up, and we, wondering whether the good abbot had yet missed us, and if so, whither he supposed us to have gone, ran out of the little port of Rye with a fair fresh breeze blowing on our quarter, and steering S.E., made straight for the coast of France.

Off Fairlight we were joined by the Winchelsea ships, and then on we sped as fast as our keels would carry us.

We were a goodly company. In our two ships we mustered, including the mariners working them, as many as a hundred and eighty men. The Winchelsea ships held two hundred more, and all were as hardy and trusty fellows as could be wished for such an adventure. Our weapons were almost as varied as the men. We had fifty crossbowmen and some few men with short spears. The rest of us carried bills and axes, swords and daggers—weapons very serviceable and proper for the work we had in hand.

Five hours' sailing with our friendly wind brought us on to the coast which we purposed to assault. The cliffs loomed out in the darkness of a winter's morning, and a break or chasm in their line showed us the entrance to our haven. Ashford, who had bidden his colleagues in the other vessels do the same, now gave his final orders for what the men were to do as soon as they should have landed on the beach. We were to wait for each other till all should be ready to march, a certain few being set apart to have care of the ships; then, strict silence being observed by every one, to march rapidly, under his guidance, to the market-place, there to disperse under our respective leaders, and effectually to take possession of the town. The citizens who resisted were to be put to death; all women and children were to go unharmed; the citizens who could be taken were to be put on board the ships; the town was to be spoiled and plundered. The Rye bells, the objects of the expedition, were to be retaken; and, that being done, a retreat was to be made to the ships.

Ashford, knowing the harbour thoroughly, led the way in the *Sancta Maria*. The *Black Prince*, our consort, followed, and then came the two *Winchelsea* cogs. At a certain point, whence the velocity we had would suffice to carry us to the beach, Ashford let go his sheets and clewed up his sail; a few minutes more, and a dull grating sound was heard under our keel, and we knew we had grounded in Peter's Haven. In perfect silence, as though we had been dumb creatures, we got over the side and waded to the shore. As each ship touched the strand her company did the same, and in less than half an hour from the time we took the ground our whole force was in order of battle, marching forward to the market-place of the town.

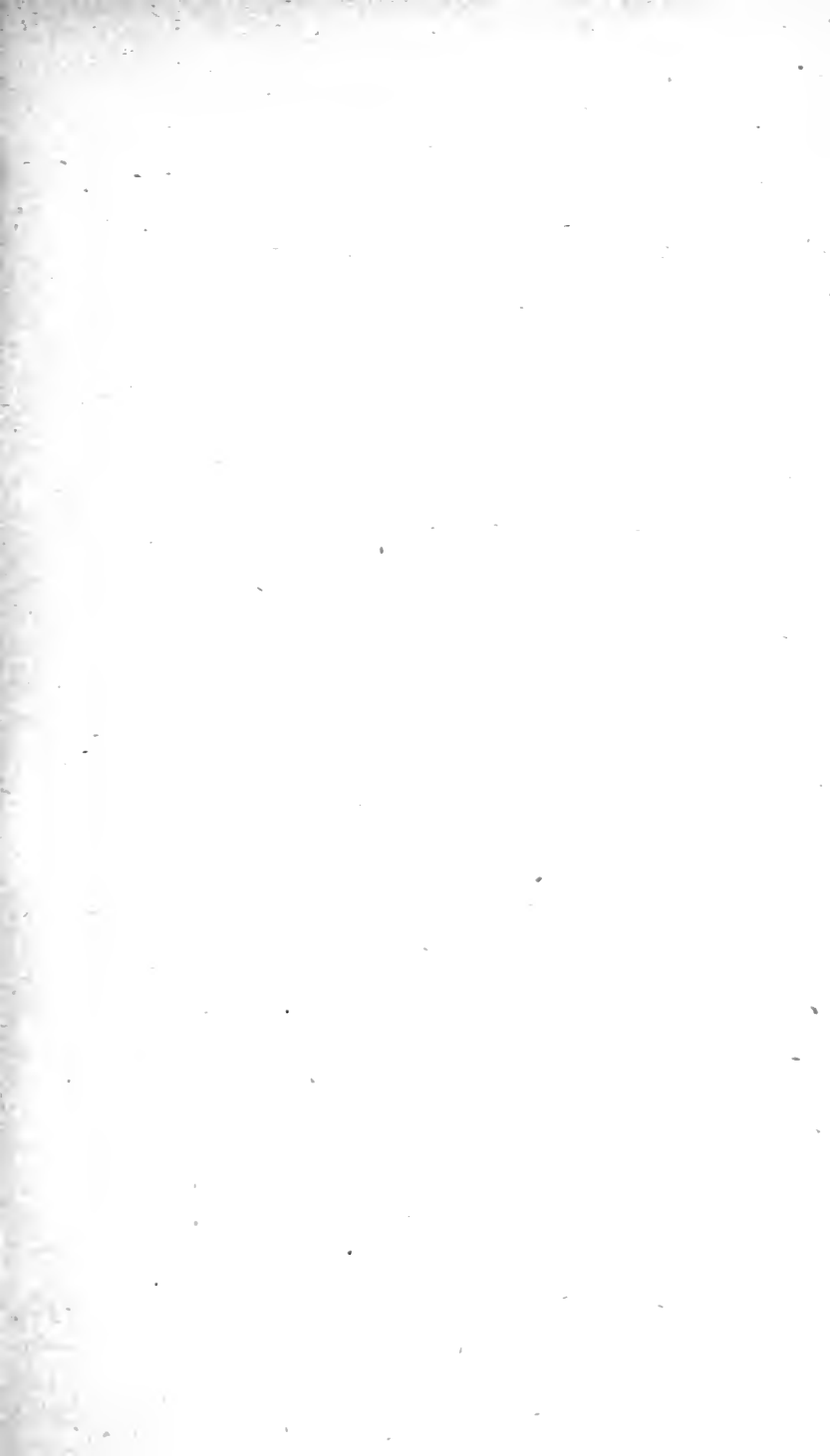
Hitherto all had gone well — could not have gone better; but before we had gone many yards, the tramp of so many men, the noise incidental to the quietest movement of this kind, had attracted attention; and whilst we were yet some three hundred yards from our destination, an alarm was given and the townsmen were aroused. A crowd of well-armed men were soon in the street, and it was evident we should have to fight for possession.

“Steady! keep firm!” said Ashford, as some of his men seemed disposed to make a rush. “Order is safety, confusion is destruction!”

And on we marched in a compact body to the head of the nearest street, where the first blows were exchanged. A volley of bolts from our crossbowmen—who, being stationed on either flank, opened out at their option free of the others, and shot—made an impression upon our enemies of which we were not slow to avail ourselves. A rush by the spearmen cleared some yards more of the street, and then a hand-to-hand running fight took place through the streets of the town, many of the French being slain and some being taken.

At the corner of one of the streets leading away from the market-place I heard loud and frequent screams issuing from a house close by—screams mingled with an occasional jeer or mocking laugh; and, instinctively feeling that some devilry was on foot, I ran into the passage of the house whence the cries came. There in the room which led off from the passage I found two of our men and a young Frenchwoman. The room bore unmistakable signs of the spoiler’s hand: the furniture was broken, the hangings were cut down, the pictures pierced, the bedding was rent and scattered about the room. On the floor lay the almost inanimate body of a young man, with a yawning wound on the left side of the chest and a horrid gash down his right cheek. His hand still grasped the sword which lay beside him. He had been thus wounded in the defence of his hearth, and now his wife, whose shrieks of grief were truly heartrending, was struggling for the possession of the body, endeavouring to save the small golden locket which, as I afterwards found, contained a lock of her own bright hair, from being snatched off the neck of her dying husband. Already loaded with spoil, the robbers coveted this little thing, and, in spite of threat or entreaty, were dragging the woman by force—for they could not remove her by menaces—from the position she had chosen to defend.

“Shame on you!” I cried, as I rushed into the room. “For God’s dignity let the woman go!” And as the only answer I





HERBERT RESCUES THE FRENCHWOMAN FROM THE HAND OF RYAN

could get was a caution to mind my own business, and I saw that one of the brutes was in the act of pricking the poor creature away from her husband's body with his dagger's point, I did not stay to make a second appeal, but, bidding the man nearest to me defend himself, attacked him as I would have attacked an untamed beast. The fight was sharp but not long, and after a few seconds my antagonist fell heavily against the wall with a deep thrust in the thigh. His companion ran out into the street, and I, leaving the other to crawl out as he might, proceeded to comfort the woman and to help her raise her husband's body on to the bed.

The poor soul was thankful enough, and, while staunching the stabs which yawned so bloodily in her husband's side, ceased not to pour forth expressions of her gratitude to me. As time did not admit of delay, I was about to raise my hand to shake hers, when I felt mine so numbed as to be almost incapable of feeling, and, looking down, saw that it was bleeding. The wound must have been received in the late encounter. I caught up a handkerchief, tied it tightly round my arm, and stopped the flow of blood. The poor woman offered to assist me, but I declined her help, and, bidding her God speed, got out again into the street.

There the confusion and noise were deafening—shouts, cries of "Courage!" curses, groans, mingled in the air, and the lurid light of kindling houses began to lend an additional element of fiendishness to the already sufficiently unholy scene. The fighting was not yet over, and, wounded as I was, I had to defend myself from blows which showered down on all sides.

Above the din of the fight could be heard the rallying cry of honest Dick Ashford, "The Rye bells! The Rye bells!" and then came the responsive cheers of our fellows, as they laid about them with deadly effect among the closely packed crowds in the narrow streets.

But for the light afforded by the blazing houses it would have been impossible to distinguish friend from foe—as it was, I shrewdly guess that many a wound which let out life that night came from what should have been a friendly sword.

Fully an hour and a half elapsed after we had entered the place before the fortune of war declared itself in our favour. The Frenchmen had fought exceedingly well, and had not yielded their town without making us pay for it a price that was exceedingly dear at the blood that it cost. Ashford was apprehensive lest assistance should come in from some of the neighbouring towns, to which the glare of Peter's Haven would tell what was going on there, if even some runaway had not expressly roused them with the news of our arrival. As soon, therefore, as the place was manifestly in our power, he drew up such of his band as were capable of further work, and having detailed a few to convey the prisoners on board the ships and make them fast there, and another detachment to care for the wounded on our own side, he declared his intention of at once getting possession of the Rye bells, and then marching off as fast he could.

It was easily ascertained from some of the people where the bells had been deposited. The good folk of Peter's Haven had never dreamed that the stolen property would be called for, and partly for the glory of God, partly for their own pride's sake, they had resolved to hang them in the belfry of the fine new church which had been built in the town in accordance with the dying order of the Seigneur de Vrie, who had wished to have such a monument to his memory. But it happened, fortunately, that the intention had not been fulfilled, or we might have been detained over-long in the town of Peter's Haven. The bells were awaiting suspension in a small shed by the side of the church, and the church, as good luck would have it, was at the very entrance to the town, and nearest, therefore, to our landing-place.

Taking a number of the people with us to assist in dragging the bells down to the shore, we hurried off to finish our work. Great and noisy was the joy of the English on bursting open the shed to which they had been guided, to find their bells—the loss of which had filled them so long with sorest shame—sound and in good order, uncracked, uninjured by all the dangers they had passed through.

To pass ropes securely round them, and to harness a number

of Frenchmen, with here and there an Englishman to show them how to pull, was the work of a very few minutes. With a loud cheer and many a joyous congratulation, the men of Rye and Winchelsea found their lost bells again on their road for home. They dragged them down and stowed them on board, whither the wounded, the prisoners for ransom, and the collected booty had already preceded them.

During the whole of the fight in Peter's Haven I had seen nothing of Archdale or Oswald. We had been separated early in the affair, and they had not been present at the muster in the market-place, nor had they taken any part in the recapture of the bells. Now that we were once more upon the beach and ready to start, they were not to be found.

Where were they? Who had last seen them? Had they been killed? Master Hale said that when the town was first gained he had seen them both, with sword in hand, cutting their way towards the street which led off from the main thoroughfare, and that he fancied they were going in that direction. Nothing further was known about them.

What was to be done? The list of the crews being called over, certainly showed a large deficiency out of the small band which had landed only a few hours before; but then it was supposed that the missing men were dead, since so much care had been taken to bring off those who were known to be wounded.

"It would be folly to wait and lose the tide," said one.

"Yes, and to let those beggarly fellows pluck up heart again and come down on us with more men—as they will do," added another.

"Yet it would be a shame to leave our mates here if they are alive," cried Ashford. "Maybe Archdale and the youngster are lying wounded in some of these wretched French dens. There's half an hour yet to high water. Who'll offer to come back and make further search?"

"That will I," I exclaimed, glad indeed to find that the selfish proposal of the first speakers did not ring an echo in the hearts of the others.

"So will I!" "And I!" sung out this man and that, till there were some twenty of us, well armed and for the most part unhurt, who volunteered for the service.

Dick Ashford took the command, and with an assurance to the shipmen that we would be back by the time of high water, marched us once more over the road leading to the town, and to the spot where Hale said he had last seen our two missing comrades.

There were two or three forlorn-looking people in the street, who, seeing as they thought a fresh party of invaders coming, took to their heels; but a brace of them were pursued and brought back, and being made acquainted with the appearance, dress, and names of the missing men, were threatened with death in its most terrible shapes if they did not presently find out where they were hidden.

As good luck would have it, my eye caught sight of a scarf, which I immediately recognised as Oswald's, lying on the flags in front of a small house not far from the corner of the street. I picked it up, and showing it to the prisoners, who were trembling all over with fright, asked them where he was who had worn that scarf.

It so happened that one of the prisoners, neither of whom recognised those we sought by the description we gave, had seen the wearer of that scarf captured and dragged away, with another Englishman who was with him. In the height of the struggle, when as yet it seemed uncertain whether assailants or defenders would win the town, Archdale and Oswald had got cut off from the rest of us, and, being surrounded and overpowered, were taken away and thrust into a cellar behind one of the houses.

A very few minutes sufficed to make the man conduct us to the particular house where he said our friends were confined. It was a small house, near to where we stood, but built of stone, and having the appearance of belonging to some one above the commonalty. It was, in truth, the mayor's own dwelling.

Our summons at the gate being unheeded, and our business not

admitting of delay, the door was speedily burst open, and then we found that we had lighted upon a very wasp's nest.

Within this house had retired a goodly number of the townsmen, who, finding the day going against them, had retreated to its shelter, in the hope of being able to make a stand later if an opportunity should present itself, or of making a sally upon our retreating force if that should be acting disorderly. They had dragged here several of our men, including Archdale and Oswald, intending to hold them as hostages for the safety of their own friends.

As the door fell inwards the Frenchmen poured out, some thirty or thirty-five, and taking us by surprise, gained a temporary advantage over us. A desperate fight now ensued. French and English fought bravely, but the latter with an energy which was heightened by the confidence which recent victory inspired. At the cost of another slight wound on my arm, I slew a man who opposed my passage, and darting into the house, sought the cellar where my comrades were confined.

In a few seconds Archdale and Oswald, released from durance, were laying about them with a fury which was not unnatural, considering that their experience, albeit a short one, made them nervously anxious to destroy all chance of being restored to their worse than Egyptian bondage.

As I was coming out of the house again, a man who had watched and waited for me thrust himself in the way, and made a cut at me which must have cloven my head had it struck home according to its master's intention. I saw his object, and just had time to avoid the blow by leaping on one side, when down came the blade and buried its point and end edge in the planking of the floor. Before the man had time to repeat his stroke I flew at him like a wild cat, and taking my sword short in my hand, drove it through my enemy just below the shoulder, pinning him to the wall.

The man dropped heavily down. I wrenched my sword out of him and left him to his fate, only stopping to take from his wrist a broad gold bracelet which he wore, and which I thought it no shame to seize as my share in the spoil; not that I coveted such

a thing for my own use, but I had a place to bestow it which methought became the ornament better than the arm of a Frenchman.

Our object in coming back having been attained, Dick Ashford lost no time in getting down to the beach again. In another quarter of an hour our vessels floated on the top of the tide, and were sailing with a favourable breeze out of Peter's Haven.

It was an hour after noon when, with the retaken bells on board, we again cast anchor before the town of Rye.

Archdale hurried off as soon as we landed, anxious to get back to the abbey; but my wounds, though not severe, were so painful as to necessitate my stopping to have them properly dressed. Oswald stopped with me, and gave me the assistance of his arm when, after four hours' needful rest, we quitted Rye to walk to the abbey.



CHAPTER XVI.

WE GET A LECTURE, BUT DO NOT THINK THE ABBOT IS
REALLY ANGRY.

"Fear not the anger of the wise to raise;
Thou best canst bear reproof who merit'st praise."

POPE.



AS soon as we reached Battle Abbey, to whose hospitable walls Brush only came out to bid us welcome, we saw that something was wrong. We felt that we had not behaved altogether properly in respect of our late trip. The way in which we had sneaked off, the consciousness of having been underhanded in the matter, and the want of confidence we had shown in the abbot's discretion or kindness, all reproached us, and took off from the satisfaction we naturally felt in having been partakers in a really important service. We felt that we had not acted kindly towards our good abbot, and therefore we felt vexed with ourselves; and the light in which our conduct was viewed by the other inmates of the place was apparent as soon as we entered the yard.

Father Ambrose was crossing from the refectory door to the wicket which led to his own apartments, and had a full view of us as we passed across the pavement; but although he saw us, and we knew that he did so, he took no notice whatever of us, and when I — hurt at the altered manner of one I loved — ran up to him and asked for his daily blessing, he said coldly that he could not now speak with me, and passed on across the yard. The serving-men were civil, but nothing more. There was an air of coolness about everybody which was entirely new; and though twenty-four hours only had elapsed since we were last in the abbey, it seemed as though in that time every one's temper had undergone a change of climate, and had not warmed by the change.

Carrow and Brush were the only two creatures who seemed to be unaltered. Brush came jumping up, burying his nose in my hand, wagging his tail, and licking my face as I stooped down to him, so rejoiced was the faithful creature at his master's return. With him for our welcomer, we went to the stable and paid a visit to the nags, who seemed next best glad to see us. Carrow whinnied loudly by way of greeting, and impatiently testified, both by head and foot, her desire to show her joy outside the stable.

Oswald and I were getting rather disgusted at this very unflattering reward of our perils, and from the tops of two bundles of straw were discussing the incidents of our recent adventure, when a man came into the stable and informed us that his lordship the abbot desired to see us at once in his oratory.

"Now for it, I say!" said Oswald. "I wonder if he is very fierce?"

"If the servants have taken their cue from him, he can't be in a very amiable temper," I answered.

"No, that's certain," said Oswald; "but look here, Hubert, you must have your arm bound up again before you go in there. The bandage is coming off. I'll go in and say you are coming."

"You'll do nothing of the sort, my dear fellow," I answered, knowing well that Oswald wished to get in first, that he might

bear the brunt of the abbot's anger before I came. "It's very kind of you, but the arm will do as it is for the present. I cannot think of your facing the abbot alone if he is really displeased with the pair of us."

"You had more of the fighting over yonder than I had," rejoined Oswald; "it is only fair my turn should come."

"But this will be harder to bear than the blows of the Frenchmen, Oswald, if his lordship be really angry, for he has the power of making his words bite deeper than any blade whatever. But we must not stay here talking, when the abbot has sent for us. Let us put a bold face on it, and go in."

Stopping only to wash off some of the grosser stains upon our faces and clothing, we quitted the stable, and followed the servant who had summoned us to the presence of Hamo de Offyngton.

The abbot had been reading; and as he raised his head at our entrance, and showed a face a little stern, but without any trace of anger upon it, the sense of misgiving to which I owned a few minutes before gave way to a consciousness that even rebuke from such a man was a pleasure highly to be prized.

When the brother who had bidden us enter had withdrawn, the abbot began with—

"Where were you last night, Hubert, that you were not at vespers?"

"I was at Rye, my lord," I answered, without volunteering more words.

"And for what purpose?" asked the abbot.

"In order to accompany Master Ashford's expedition to Peter's Haven," said I, willing to let the length of the examination give me time to prepare for what was to come after it.

"Had you my leave to go?"

"I had not, my lord," I replied.

"Then why did you go?"

"Because my heart was set upon the adventure, my lord."

"Why did you not ask my leave?"

"Because I feared it would be refused," I said.

"So you preferred the pleasure which you anticipated from the adventure to that of obeying me?"

"Indeed, my lord, I did not so weigh the two," I answered; "but thought that as, perhaps, your station would not allow you to sanction an expedition of this kind, so you could not sanction our joining in it; but I trusted that, the action being done, your displeasure would not have been so heavy as I grieve to find it is."

The abbot was silent for a minute, while we looked exceedingly foolish. He then went on:

"I do not know that I am so much displeased with your fault as I am pleased at your frank confession of it, and I am willing to believe that you did not reflect enough on what you were about to let you see the effect of your conduct upon others besides yourselves. For the expedition, I knew somewhat of it before it started, but, for reasons of my own, did not choose to stop it. Archdale, who is more to blame than you are, has given me an account of what happened, and I am glad to hear that you behaved like gentlemen, and that the adventure was conducted on the principles of authorised warfare. In these times, when the people are left to defend themselves, and have to bear the consequences of the Government's inability to guard the seas, there is some excuse for adventures of this kind. But your conduct yesterday in going as you did was injurious in several ways. It showed that my attempts at kindness towards you have not succeeded in winning your confidence; it set an example of defiance to my authority most prejudicial in a large house like this; and it furnished a precedent for others to follow upon less worthy occasions. I am both sorry and displeased. As a punishment, and to vindicate my authority, I forbid you to leave the precincts of the abbey for the next three days. For the sorrow you have caused me I forgive you both freely."

The calm manner and the kind voice of the speaker quite melted me; and, as truly sorry as ever I was for anything in my life, I rushed to the abbot's feet to beg his forgiveness.

"There is no need to grant it again," said he—"you have it already;" and then, noticing my bandaged arm, he insisted on

examining the wound himself, anointed the place with some cooling medicament, and strapped it up with healing bands, which he knew well—none better—how to apply. He then inquired exactly into the details of our adventure; and, as we spoke of the excitement of the approach, the arrangements made for landing, the fighting afterwards, the captures, and the return, his eye glistened as though he would have dearly enjoyed being one of the party, and we left his presence with a conviction that he thought the better of us for the exploit, although he was obliged by his office to notice the irregularity of our conduct in it.

Master Ashford was right in the main when he prophesied what would be the abbot's sentiments after the event.

Indeed, so slight seems to have been the evil impression which the Rye men's private warfare made upon Hamo de Offyngton's mind, that shortly after the event, when it was proposed to rehang the bells in the church from which they had been stolen, it required little persuasion on the part of the deputation, which came from Rye for the purpose, to induce the abbot to be present on the occasion, and to give his blessing to the quellers of evil spirits and of storms.

The three days of confinement in so large an ambit as the abbey grounds were not very irksome. The coldness of the brothers melted in the warmth of their admiration for our adventure; and by the end of a week, when we were to set out for London, as Master Philpot had ordered, there were nothing but mutual regrets that circumstances should compel our departure.

CHAPTER XVII.

OSWALD BARNES AND I LEAVE BATTLE ABBEY AND GO BACK
TO LONDON—GILBERT D'ARCY.

"And thus with good hope, and with herte blith,
They taken hir leve, and homeward gan they ride."

CHAUCER.



I was with much sorrow that I bade farewell to Battle and the district where so many happy hours had been spent; but as all things, even life itself, as Father Ambrose took the occasion to say, must have an ending, so we had to put up with the fact that the end had come to our sojourn at the abbey. I will not describe the partings which we made with all in the place, from Hamo de Offyngton himself down to Ulric the stable-lad, who, having been kind to Carrow, was highly placed in my estimation. Suffice it to say that all were sincere and hearty, those good wishes that were exchanged that day, and that as Oswald and I jumped into our saddles on the fine February morning, armed and accoutred for the journey, we felt we were leaving a pleasant place and valuable friends to whom we owed more than we could hope to repay. The abbot had bestowed on us most useful presents. To me he gave the suit of light body-armour which is hanging on the wall opposite to me as I write, and which, if it fitted me at this time I write of, as I remember it did perfectly, shows, besides sundry cracks and indentations, that the owner has spread abroad wondrously since then. I wore it on this morning for the first time, and remember that Carrow, regardless of the extra weight thus imposed upon her, arched her neck and pawed the ground with

as much pride at the accession of dignity to her master as her master had in receiving it. Our baggage was strapped to a led horse, whose bridle was fast to Oswald's left wrist. Brush, who had benefited by his country residence to grow into as handsome a hound as could be desired, was ready at call; and with the united blessings of the entire monastery, the weight of which far exceeded that of our slender baggage, we rode off at six o'clock along the road to London.

Although we were really sorry to leave Battle, yet the natural buoyancy of our spirits would not suffer us to continue long in doleful dumps; and by the time we had walked our horses a good five miles, and so got them in train for more active exercise, we almost forgot whom we were leaving behind while thinking of those to whom we were going.

We stopped to breakfast at Bodiham, ten miles from Battle, and then pushed on at a steady trot for Maidstone, which we reached at midday. Thence, after dinner, to North Cray, completing a tale of fifty miles for the day's work; and as there was no need to distress our horses or ourselves, we remained the night at that town.

Our journey had been without any incident worthy of being recorded; no one had attacked us; indeed, we had scarcely met any one on the road; and in the absence of more exciting amusement, had been driven to beguile the way with going over again in imagination the principal events of the last six months, speculating on the changes which must have taken place in London and our friends during our absence; wondering whether Alice would be as friendly as she used to be, or whether she would have donned more prudish airs with her increased age; whether Will Allein had recovered from his hurts got in the allray with Sir Walter Hood; whether old Margaret had grown sourer in her temper; and whether young Peter Wall had become more or less mischievous. Then we talked of Master Philpot's coming mayoralty, assigned ourselves the offices which in consequence we deemed should fall to us, and built a number of airy edifices in which we proposed to dwell. We even got on so far in the course of our

own promotion that we gave away patents and places to others, and before the day was out we had made the Abbot of Battle Archbishop of Canterbury, with Father Ambrose for his suffragan; given Master Ashford the wardenship of the Cinque Ports; and dubbed Archdale knight and Earl-Marshal of England. The exact quality of degree we had conferred upon ourselves I do not remember, but recollect perfectly being brought back to a consciousness that we were not yet what we aspired to be by the discovery that Carrow had cast one of her shoes, and that as there was no smith near, we, the future bestowers of titles and place, must ourselves for the nonce discharge the office of farriers, and fasten on the spare shoe which I carried in my pouch. These little incidents, with the occasional difficulties we met with in getting over the irregular road, full of ruts, holes, and huge boulders of stone, served to deprive the journey of some of its wearisomeness.

By noon the next day we had reached in safety the borough of Southwark, and, after pausing for some moist hay and a cup of ale at the Tabard, we rode on to the Surrey gate of London Bridge.

The spurrier, with whose lad Oswald had erewhile waged dreadful war, on the memorable day when the citizens went to Kennington to the young king, was still at his shop, and the great spur, at which Oswald could not help casting even now a wistful eye, still dangled from the sign-pole over the door. The grim array of heads, with some additions to their number, grinned horribly at us as of yore from the tower at the London side, and the gate was opened for us by the selfsame janitor who some months before had rebuked us for our levity in speaking of the warders on his battlements.

We trotted on past the well-known Garland, recognising every stone in the street for an old acquaintance, and, turning up Royal Street into Fenchurch Street, clattered into the well-remembered stable-yard, where old Peter Wall was rating some of his fellows in an audible voice for delinquencies, which, to judge from his tone, could be little less than high treason.

“Well, to be sure!” cried the old man, as he saw us. “God bless ye both, lads! how you be grown!”

And leaving his men to mend their ways without further exordium from him, he came forward to hold the horses whilst we dismounted.

In another minute the ostlers were scurrying about, not nimble enough to show us the attention they desired. Old Margaret, whose beauty had not increased since we left, and whose voice was if anything a trifle shriller, came out to embrace us and bid us welcome home. Before we had finished seeing to the wants of our faithful steeds, Master Philpot himself was there to welcome us; and last, but certainly not least, there came Alice, more womanly and looking prettier than the image of her which had haunted my memory for six months past, to say how glad she was her two brothers—for so she still called us—had come back again.

A merry party we were that evening at supper, none the less so that in the man who carved before Master Philpot at the table we recognised D’Arcy, whose acquaintance we made at Ludgate, and who now, having purged the evil of his former ways, was installed as chief seneschal of Philpot’s house.

A thousand questions were put and answered; the news of the country and of London inquired and told; our feats in hawking, hunting, sailing, fighting; our knowledge in learning, all too scant, I fear; the difference in our personal appearance—all passed in hasty review.

Master Philpot looked serious and Alice looked frightened when we told of the affair at Peter’s Haven; in telling which we did not conceal the fact that the abbot had chidden us for going, nor did we omit to mention the manner in which he took notice of our fault.

D’Arcy brightened up as we talked of the destruction of the town, as an old hunter pricks his ears at the music of the hounds; and, to cap our story, told us one of the Florentine War, when Sir John Hawkwood had to put a stopper on the cruelty of the vengeful papal legate—a story which on the score of ferocity put ours quite in the shade.

Thus in hearing and telling some new thing we wore the evening away till an hour beyond curfew, and then, exhausted with the travel of the last few days, and still more by the excitement consequent upon our return, we gladly accepted the offer of Master Philpot to give us leave to withdraw for the night.

The hesitation I had about embracing Alice as I used to do, and the novel sensation I felt when I noticed the same embarrassment in her, set a new tide of thought running through my mind, so that when that night I sank to sleep in the dear old room which had been mine since the day I came to London from Brooklet, a year and more ago, strange dreams haunted me, and fantastic visions in which all those with whom I had been ever thrown were jumbled together in most admirable confusion — Master Philpot steering the Sancta Maria into Peter's Haven; Alice changing places with the French wife I had saved from injury; Father Ambrose, instead of the Duke of Lancaster, confronting the bishops; and old Peter Wall appearing in Bishop Courtney's rochet and mitre as the commandant of the Winchelsea cogs. But Alice and my ambition seemed to make a match in my dreamland, for as I sank into the deep sleep of tired youth wherein dreams do not enter, she was engaged in buckling on my knightly spurs, won by me in encounter with a French knight, who had somewhere in dreamland aspersed Alice's beauty.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I GIVE ALICE WHAT I TOOK FOR HER AT PETER'S HAVEN.

"In hire is high beaute withouten pride,
Youthe, withouten grenehead or folie:
To all hire werkes vertue is hire guide."

CHAUCER.

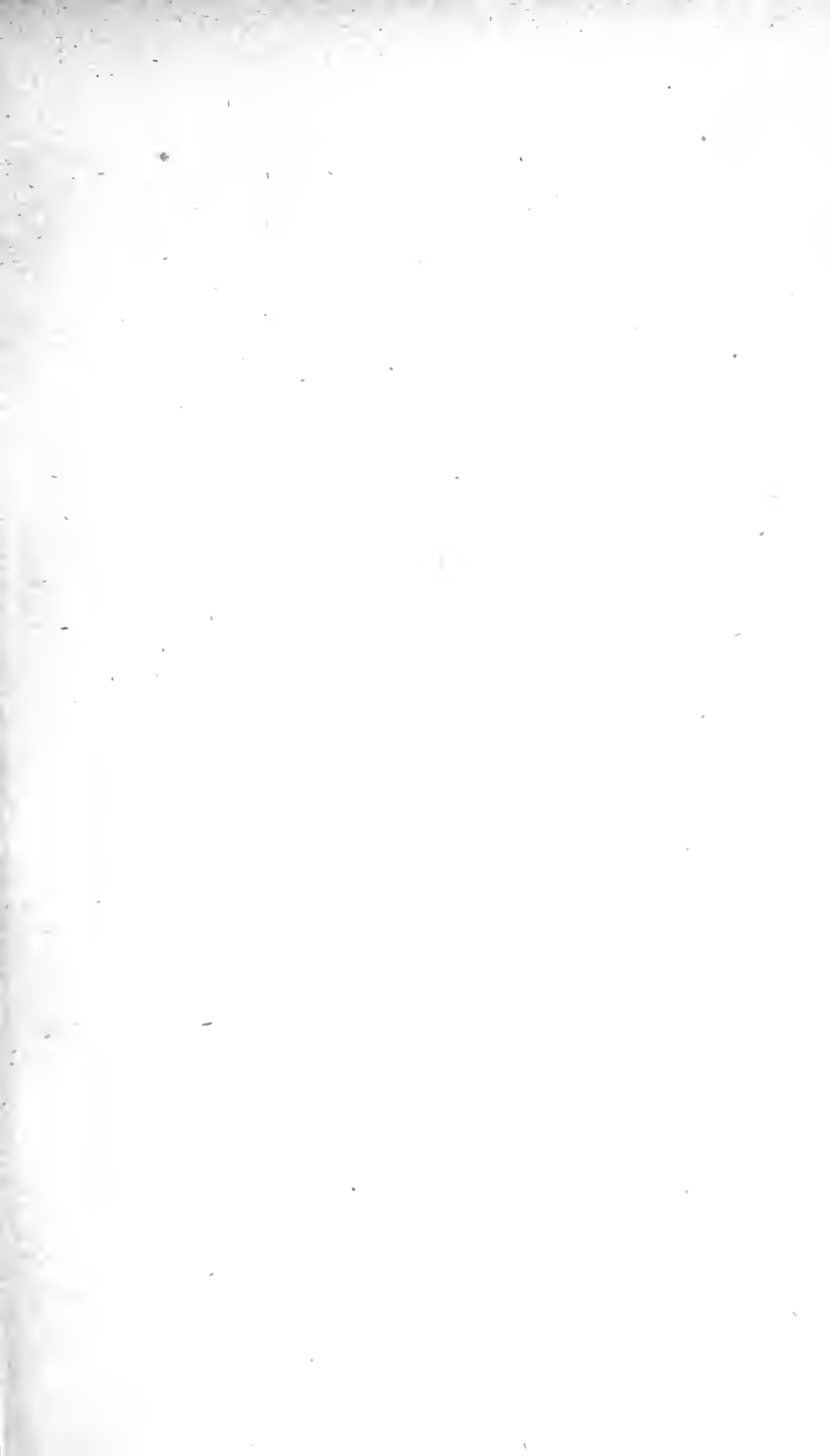


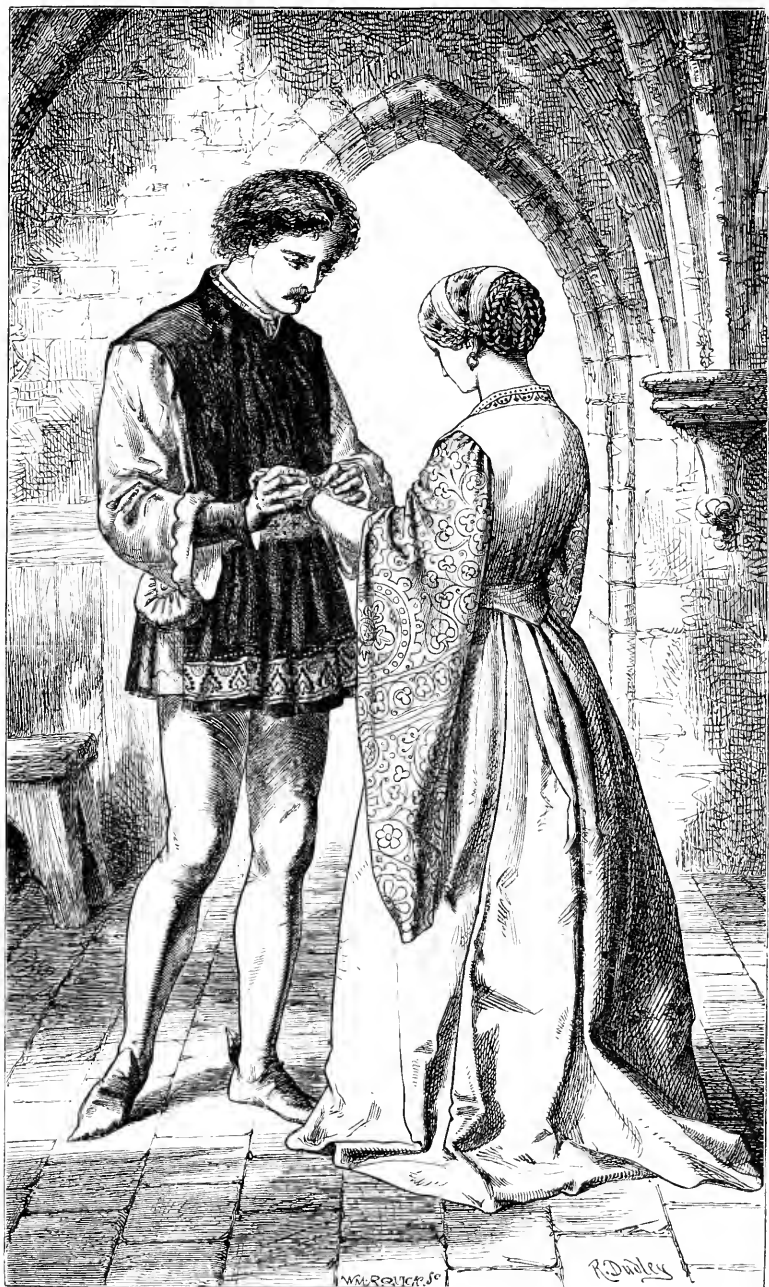
NEXT morning I was up betimes, renewing acquaintance with all the familiar nooks and corners of the house. D'Arcy, too, was about, seeing to the duties which, it seems, now devolved upon him, and which were those of general overseer of the business part of the establishment. From him I soon learned how he had come to be in that position, and all that had happened to him since the morning that we parted at Ludgate. The sentence which was then passed upon him he had undergone, and the invitation which was a rider to the sentence he had also gladly accepted. He had come to Master Philpot on the expiration of his term, and been questioned thoroughly as to his past life, wherein, as he told me, he had little but the last part of it to be ashamed of, excepting the excesses which were incidental to and inseparable from the career of a soldier of fortune. Master Philpot had been satisfied with his account so far as to determine to give him the chance of getting an honest living, and on the strength of this and of his earnest promise to deserve the kindness, D'Arcy was put to some duty in the warehouse at which he could make his trial. His efforts to do well, joined to his large experience in the ways of men and the world, soon justified his employment in a higher grade, and before two months had passed he was put to overlook the shipments of merchandise and to take the work which formerly had fallen to my share. Having dis-

charged his duty with care and faithfulness, he had just before our return to London been promoted to be general overseer of the business concerns; and there was he, who, but for the wise foresight and benevolence of John Philpot, might ere this have rotted in the foul dungeons of the Marshalsea, or swung a scarecrow upon the felon's gibbet, for crimes against society, in a position which was worthy of the man he really was—that of an honoured servant and a useful member of the community. This act of Master Philpot, in raising D'Arcy from a moral death, made an impression upon me which has lasted through life. It taught me to know how thin the separation is between a great saint and a great sinner; how circumstances may pull even an archangel down; and how a deed of kindness is like a ray of light shining into a dark place—a revivifying spirit dispelling the thick clouds of gross gloom from round the soul of man. It taught me practical charity, and has had the effect of ever making me withhold my private censure from the blackest villain upon whom my duty as a magistrate in after-life has compelled me to pass the just sentence of the law.

Whilst I was thus marvelling at the changes in the man, and unconsciously receiving the impression just spoken of, I was aware of the presence of the damsel whose image had in such fantastic shapes obtruded itself upon my dreams the night before. "Sister Alice," no longer "little Alice," was before me—the same, though changed, who had given me the gloves to wear on the morning the games were played in Smithfield, who had been sorry for me when my father died, and had done all her kind young heart knew to lessen the weight of that dear father's loss. She, too, was going about her business, her chain of keys and housewife's pocket hanging from her girdle, her face looking young for one with household cares, but radiant with health and intelligence—a sight pleasant to look at, one that all men "mote admire."

"Good morning, Hubert!" she said as she came up to me, holding out her hand and smiling. "I hope you are the better for your night's rest?"





HUBERT GIVES THE FRENCHMAN'S BRACELET TO ALICE.

"Thank you, yes, Alice," said I, "fresh as a May morning, or sister Alice's cheek," I added, kissing her, though I felt the same momentary hesitation about doing so that I had felt last night, and found it an unexpected effort to get out my second simile. She, too, reddened to a warm glow as I offered my salute, and looked so thoroughly uncomfortable that I nearly wished I had not kissed her. What could be the reason of this? Had the half-year's interval wrought so great a change in the old relationship as to make our old way of acknowledging it a questionable one now? Perhaps my long stay with those sombre old monks, who were rarely cheered by the sight of a pretty maiden's face, had caused me to be infected with some of their shyness, and made me feel that one beat of awkward bashfulness which had whispered me to forego the pleasure of renewed acquaintance with pretty maiden's cheek. Well, Battle was certainly not the place to learn freedom from reserve in such matters, and as the idea of Father Ambrose, with his modest shamefacedness and uncourtly way, attempting to do what I had just done, occurred to my mind, I almost burst out laughing then and there; but that would have led to an explanation, which would have made matters worse. I dismissed the notion of my having caught the disease of mawkishness as soon as it came into my mind, for I felt instinctively that that was not the reason of my embarrassment, and it certainly could not have accounted for the like in Alice. I did not solve the riddle at the time, but kept it for future conning.

"Sister Alice," I said, with an unintentional emphasis on the word "sister," "I have brought something for you, if you will accept it. Guess what it can be?"

This question admitting so wide a solution, though as senseless as it is often asked, stood Alice in some stead here. It gave her time to recover from the little discomposure I have just attempted to account for, and to regain her wonted ease of manner. She guessed all sorts of things but the right one, and after having teased her for full five minutes after I had aroused her curiosity I produced from my pouch the gold bracelet I had taken from the Frenchman at Peter's Haven.

A cry of pleasure escaped from her lips as she looked at the handsome toy which lay in my hand.

"How beautiful! Thank you, Hubert!" she exclaimed as I fastened it round her extended arm. "How good of you to think of me in the midst of such horrors as you were in!"

"Oh, for that matter, Alice," I said—and I said truly—"I think of you many an hour in the day; but then, you know, I could not help thinking specially of you, for the gauntlets you made for me a year ago I wore that night, and if it had not been for the guard on the right hand one, the man who carried that bracelet had like to have snipped off my hand at the wrist."

"St. Mary be praised that he did not, Hubert!" replied Alice. "But what do you mean by the man who carried this bracelet?"

"I took it from one of the Frenchmen at Peter's Haven," I answered.

"But how did he let you do so?" inquired Alice, still admiring the toy.

"I killed him," I said, "and took it from him."

An expression of horror passed over the childish face, and the beauty of the bracelet dimmed sadly as I spoke. She was about to unloose it from her arm, when I begged her to remember that the late owner had tried to kill me, and that I, having had the advantage of him, was doing no more than the greatest captains—even the Black Prince himself—had done, in bringing the fair spoils of open war to my lady—to my sister's disposal.

"'Tis true," she replied, "but how terrible it must be to kill men at all! Poor fellow!" she added, again looking at the bracelet, "he shall have the benefit of my prayers whenever Father David offers the Mass for the Dead, even though good Master Wyclif say it be a foolish practice. What is written on the scroll, Hubert?"

"The words are French, Alice," I said; "cannot you make them out? I thought you learned the tongue of Madame Eglantine?"

And so she did, but then the effect of Madame Eglantine's teaching upon her pupils was to put them in nearly as good a

position with regard to the language as that in which Master Chaucer's prioress was, of whom he wrote—and I remember how we laughed at the wit when the poet himself read the passage one night to us at Master Philpot's—

“That Frensch sche spak ful faire and fetysly,
Aftur the schole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frensch of Parys was to hire unknowe.”

Alice could not decipher the words, which I read to her, looking at her face the while as though I saw the letters written there—a process, too, which served very considerably to aid me in afterwards solving the difficulty about the hesitation to salute already spoken of. The words were, “*Tout cède à l'amour*” (“Love is all-powerful”)—a motto true in its application to our dealings one with another, as it was beyond question true of the redemption of mankind.

Whether Alice or I at that time took this broad view of the proverb I do not know, but am inclined to think we took a narrower view of its meaning, and applied it as good Father David used to exhort us to apply the threats and promises in his sermons—practically to our own two selves. The result, however, of our meeting that morning was that Alice became possessed of a fine bracelet; I had the great satisfaction of giving it to her; and the Frenchman who lately owned it had the spiritual benefit accruing from the orisons of as guileless a spirit as could beg for his release from post-mortem limbo.

♦

CHAPTER XIX.

JOHN PHILPOT HAS "A FEW WORDS" WITH ME, AND I PREPARE
TO LEAVE LONDON AGAIN—OSWALD BARNES HAS LEAVE TO
JOIN US.

"He wold the see were kept for anything
Betwixen Middleburgh and Orwell."

CHAUCER.



AFTER breakfast that morning, when all had gone about their daily avocations, Master Philpot desired to have some words with me. Cares, many and varied, had multiplied upon him since our departure from London ; he looked anxious and worn, and more than six months older. In addition to his duties as alderman, which were considerable, he had been chosen by the citizens to represent their rights in the national Parliament, and now, in addition to these and the cares of his own immense private business, it was proposed to put upon him the burdens of the mayoralty.

The office of alderman was no light matter in a large city like London, where the interests of as many as ninety thousand people had to be cared for in the common council of them all, and justice administered to those of each several ward. The duty of the burgesses sitting in the Commons' House of Parliament, hitherto considered as an encumbrance to be got rid of if possible, was now, since the sitting of the Good Parliament, deemed to be an honourable and noble one. Fewer and fewer became the petitions from needy boroughs that they might be spared the cost and charges of sending a burgess to London. No longer in the cities and great towns of the kingdom did the citizens choose at the dictation of a baron some decayed nobleman as their represent-

ative, who cared not a straw about their privileges: the best of the townsmen were pitched upon to undertake the responsible duty of combating for the dear rights of the commons against kingly tyranny on the one side and the greed of feudal despots on the other. By dint of much perseverance, and despite the frowns of haughty nobles who held the commons cheap, much had been done by the people's representatives; and it was mainly due to the energy and persistence of Master Philpot and others of like mould that the last grant of money made to the king had been voted only after examination of the royal accounts. The money itself had been paid over to treasurers appointed by the House, the treasurers being Philpot and his friend Master Walworth, who were to spend the money only for the purposes for which the money was voted, and were to answer to the House for all the money they received. This alone was a great charge; and then came the daily cares of a marvellously large trade which my master carried on with all the marts of the continent. His name was as well known in the banks of Florence as were the names of the Medici or Alberti themselves. At Bordeaux, at Genoa, and Calais the rich Englishman's ships were familiar to all; and his was the vessel, his were the mariners who made the venturous voyage to a Muscovite port, and brought back such strange things from that barbarous country as were only less strange than the stories they had to tell about them. Among the merchants of the staple he was easily first. He sold more than any one of them, and the largeness of his purchases gave him the command of all the markets. But the care of this business, added to those other matters, formed a load not lightly to be borne, and, to increase his burden, it was now intended to make him chief magistrate of the turbulent city of London.

But there was a care which, for the nonce, lay closer than any of these to the heart of John Philpot, and it was in order to make me the sharer of it that my master expressed a wish to have a few words with me in his own private room.

For some time past he had noticed, as he told me, the utter incapacity of the governing council to guard the land from scathe

and harm, but more especially to guard the sea. Times were altered from those of the great King Edward, who

“ In the summer fair
Of lusty season, when cleared was the air,
He had ready ships made before,
Great and huge, not few, but many a score ;
Full three thousand and six hundred also,
Stately enough on our sea to go ; ”

and with them had sailed the island round, exercising his mariners and men-of-war, and frightening his enemies into respect for the coasts.

Now the meanest Scotch or French pirate insulted our ports, as we ourselves had seen at Winchelsea, and those who could not help themselves the government could not aid. The matter had been specially brought home to my master's attention by an event which had recently taken place, and it was with reference to that he now spoke to me.

“ Hubert,” said he, as we seated ourselves on two settles close to the fire, “ have you heard of the misdoings of John Mercer, the Scot ? ”

“ He who was taken near Cherbourg ? ” I inquired.

“ No, lad, but the son of him,” answered Philpot—“ he who has been scouring the seas of all the trading ships he could catch, and was like to have caught the Leopard a se'nnight ago, coming over from Sluys. The father may have had some wrong done him, and, in truth, I believe he has ; and although the desire in his son to avenge his father's capture may be a highly commendable one in him, yet the determination to put a stop to his wasting our ships is no less laudable in us. My friend Barnes, Oswald's father, the wool-stapler, has lost two fine cogs to him ; John Lofken reckons three barges less than he did a month since ; and there is scarce a merchant in this city who has not cause to complain that his ships and merchandise have been taken by the Scot. My complaints to the government are met with indifference and neglect. The Bishop of London affects ignorance on the whole subject, the Earl of March secretly rejoices at our sufferings,

while Lord Latymer and others of his following do not scruple to mock our grave petitions. The impeachment of those men in the late king's time does not seem to have lessened their folly, and they will go on till they meet the fool's reward."

"But why not apply to Sir John Arundel, the new earl marshal?" I said. "Surely he is bound to lend you aid!"

"I would rather pluck out my tongue than ask it," said Philpot. "I trust that man's honesty as little as his word. The Duke of Lancaster, who had the money that we gave to guard the seas, is more bent on forwarding his title to the Spanish crown than on looking to our rights. I trust none of them, and am resolved to do their duty for them at my own cost. Will you help me?"

"What *do* you mean, father?" I said, as I saw the good man looking stern and resolute. "Will you make war upon Mercer yourself?"

"Why not, lad?" said he; "we must catch the wasp that stings us, and do our best to smoke his kindred from their nest. The nobles who should defend us are laggards and excuse-makers. They feel not the prick of this thorn as we merchants do, and so they neglect to pull it out; but, an' they like it or not, the thorn shall out, and if they will not attempt it, why, we must."

"Have you spoken of this to any?" I inquired.

"To none but yourself as yet, though I have matured my plans for the expedition for some time past, and it was for this especial purpose I bade you return from Battle when I did. There are twelve of my largest vessels at anchor in the Thames, well manned and provisioned. Philip Aubert, my oldest and best shipmaster, is at home, and good lodesmen, I doubt not, can be got in plenty for any navigation in the world. My plan is to equip the ships with the best arms that can be made, to get extra men to make the venture, and so make up fighting crews. That done, I mean to give Aubert the first command, and I had thought to offer you the second place."

"The second place for me?" said I. "Sir, you amaze me! What have I done to warrant this generous confidence in me?"

"That is my affair, Hubert," answered Philpot. "As I am the projector of the expedition, I surely have a right to dispose of the commands in it; and if I choose to imagine an old head can rest upon young shoulders, and ill should come of it, why, then I have but myself to blame, and no one else can say a word."

"But, sir," said I, "the responsibility of——"

"Will you undertake the post or not?" interrupted Philpot. "I offer it to you: time presses: if you decline it I must ask some other."

He was in that humour in which he was not to be dallied with; so, smothering my surprise and my joy at this unexpected mark of confidence, and reserving for after-digestion the pride it begot in me, I said at once,

"I accept your offer, and will endeavour to prove myself worthy of it. When do you intend the fleet should sail?"

"This evening," replied Philpot. "Can you be ready?"

"Within ten minutes, sir," I said, "if need be; but before making preparations for the voyage, am I at liberty to ask a further boon?"

"What is it?" answered he.

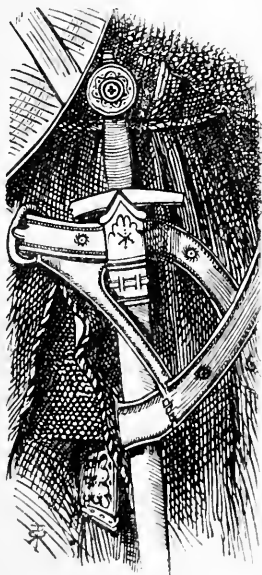
"That Oswald Barnes may accompany me."

"He may; and I had also determined, in the event of your assenting to do this service, that D'Arcy should be of the party. He is an old hand at adventures of this sort, and, besides that he can fight well, he can, I am sure, give good advice. He will be under your orders, but you had better make him your lieutenant. Now go. I will give immediate orders for the shipment of the arms and provisions, which are ready stored in the warehouse. You make your arrangements with Oswald and D'Arcy, get your ship—the Wanderer—ready for sea, and be prepared to sail under honest Philip Aubert with the evening's tide. For a few hours, farewell!"

And so saying, the good man and patriot left me astounded at the excess of my good fortune.

Though I looked older, I had not as yet attained twenty years, and thus to be put forward in such a place in so honourable an

enterprise almost covered me with confusion. Never was the counsel of my dying father more needed than now, and, lo! whilst I stood wondering at the size to which I had grown in so short a time, came the words "Be true to yourself" sounding in my ears; and in obedience to him who being dead yet spoke to me, I braced my nerves to the task, and set at once about the execution of it.



CHAPTER XX.

OUR SHIPS DROP DOWN THE THAMES AND ARRIVE AT THE NORE.

“ And with a dropping industry
They skip from stem to stern : the boatswain whistles,
The master calls, and treble their confusion.”

Pericles, Prince of Tyre.



SWALD was delighted at the news. D'Arcy was extravagantly joyful. Alice only looked distressed and uncomfortable; but she was too brave a girl to say anything against the expedition, for she knew well that private wishes must never interfere with public duty. That much her father's example had taught her, and she was so true to her model as to show but by look the regret her heart felt.

It was a busy morning we had that March day. The arms and shields had all to be examined, to see that they had not spoiled whilst remaining in store, and then to be got down to Billingsgate, thence to be sent in skiffs to the vessels in the stream. Philip Aubert, who had had the squadron ready for sea these seven days past, busied himself in enlisting fresh men for the service. D'Arcy looked after the tackle for the pavises, and saw that the proper equipment of arms was served out to each vessel. Master Philpot had his orders to Aubert written out, which a young choir lad, lent from Paul's, was to read to him at sea. I had a copy of the roll for the guidance of my five ships. All Billingsgate and Thames Street were alive with the completers of our preparations—men hurrying to and fro, like bees about a hive, each bearing something or other for the benefit of the community at large. Here came one bending under the weight

of a bale of pennons, there came another with huge sheaves of arrows, a third with cases of long broad knives, the use of which did not need to be suggested; and others bore units in the multitude of things which are requisite for the fitting out of even a small squadron.

As I was coming down East Cheap about two o'clock, having been on a visit to Bowyer's Row, where I had had my crossbow newly strung and furnished, I met Sir Michael de la Pole and Sir Nicholas Brembre walking the contrary way. I was about to pass them, not thinking they would know me, when the latter, who had seen me several times at Master Philpot's house, beckoned me to stop, and asked what all this equipment of war vessels might mean.

"Nay, Sir Nicholas," I said, "you must ask those who may tell you. I have no commission to relate my master's business."

"A saucy varlet, by the Rood!" exclaimed De la Pole. "'Twere better for you to give a straight answer to a plain question, young sir! and not to give a nobleman such words."

"I will take the risk of that, Sir Michael, when a nobleman asks a question I am not empowered to answer," replied I.

"How now, fellow! still so hardy?" said he. "Take this to teach you better manners," and attempting to suit his action to his word, he raised his arm to strike me in the face. Fortunately for me, I had later experience in fist-fighting than Sir Michael had, and, avoiding the blow which he aimed at me, I delivered him one with all my strength full on the chest, springing at the same moment on one side of him, so that my foot was just behind him. The blow sent him backwards the least little bit, but that was sufficient to bring him in contact with my extended foot, catching in which he lost his balance and fell headlong into the kennel. Cries of derision issued from the mouths of the bystanders, who had rushed out from the adjoining cooks' shops on hearing a scuffle in the street; these, and offers of liniment for broken heads, herbs for healing, and dandelion for ruffled temper, met the displeased ear of Sir Michael as he lay across the path.

"I crave your pardon, sir," I said, as I helped to raise him;

"I did not purpose to overthrow you thus, and I trust you will remember you attacked me first."

"You shall hear of this again," he observed in an angry tone as he strode off in the direction of the Tower, "and in a place, too, where your low companions cannot aid you, I promise."

"I must take my chance of that," I said as the angry knight walked away; but knowing that his influence with the authorities was nearly as great as his malevolence towards any who offended him, I thought it best to avoid all risk of being detained by getting as quickly as possible on board my ship, so calling a boat at Baynard's Castle wharf, I went with all despatch on board the *Wanderer*, giving the rowers extra money to conceal their knowledge of which vessel I was in. There I found everything ready for starting—the crew complete, the sails and bonnets bent, the pavises in their places, spare spars lashed up, provisions and stores all stowed away. D'Arcy was there, but not Oswald. He had gone to take leave of his father and friends, and to make some final arrangements for departure. As I did not think it safe to venture again on shore, or even to expose myself in the view of passing boats, I remained quiet under cover of the aftercastle.

By five o'clock Oswald was on board, bringing messages of God-speed from those I cared should wish it me. He was the last we wanted of our complement, and the boat which brought him I sent to fetch the masters of the ships in my division on board the *Wanderer*. I gave them their orders what to do on our passage to the Great Nore; that they should follow in an appointed order my ship, which bore the river lodesman or pilot, and, if possible, communicate with me again on arriving at the river's mouth, but if that should not be practicable, through circumstances of wind or what not, they were to keep close together in the rear of the *Wanderer*, the five ships forming the weather division of the squadron. By the time the masters had returned on board their ships, Philip Aubert had hung out the signal to weigh anchor, and by six o'clock, when the tide had just begun to turn, our little squadron sailed away from the bridge of London.

Just as Aubert's ship, the *Merlin*, which was leading, came abreast of the Tower, a boat full of men shot out from the Tower wharf, and rowed rapidly to her. The hail from her deck was answered by a handsomely-dressed man in the stern of the boat, who commanded her in the king's name to be stopped. This was a command more easily given than obeyed. The tide was running down, the *Merlin* had her trife half let down, and was just getting fair way; there was, moreover, an utter absence of inclination on the part of the captain of her to stop his ship for *any one*. As the boat's bow touched the *Merlin*'s side, a rope was thrown to her, and she towed alongside while the ship kept on her course.

"Stop!" roared the man who had previously hailed, and who was now recognised as Sir John Arundel, the earl marshal. "Lower that sail, or I'll arrest every man of you."

But as Sir John Arundel was not master of the ship, no one obeyed his order; and as Philip Aubert, who *was* the captain, was seized with sudden deafness, *he* gave no orders, and the sail remained as it was.

Taking in the slack of the painter with which the boat was made fast, the boatmen pulled her close up to the *Merlin*'s side, and Sir John Arundel, with half a dozen of his followers, scrambled up her bulwarks and on to the deck. Sir Michael de la Pole, who was also of the party, remained in the boat.

Without waiting for orders from any one, Sir John Arundel, as soon as he got on board, ran to the leese of the ship, and loosed the sheet which held the bellying sail, intending to check the ship; but whether it was through awkwardness on his part, or whether a sudden gust of wind caught the loosened sail and flapped it across him, or from whatever cause, certain it is that Sir John, in three minutes from the time he came on board, quitted the *Merlin*'s deck, and whereas he had mounted her from his barge, he left her for the water. The accident happened before any could prevent it; and fortunate it was for Sir John that the same moment he fell over, the painter of his boat was, by chance or design, loosened from the weather side of the ship, so that the

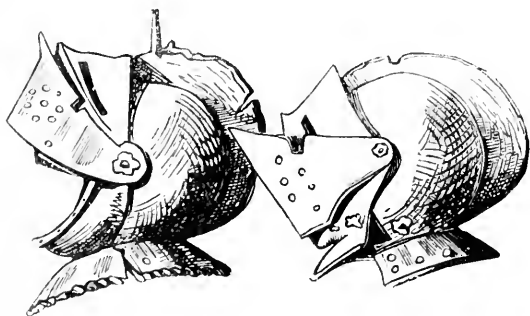
boat, drifting astern, was at liberty to go to the unfortunate man's assistance. Before he had been picked up and placed in the stern sheets of his barge, the fugitive sail of the *Merlin* once more felt the check of its sheet, the other vessels of the squadron had swept past in their order, and we knew not till afterwards, though shrewd guesses were made in the *Wanderer*, that Sir John Arundel's mission had been undertaken specially in my interests.

The *Wanderer* was as pretty a cog as there was in the squadron—180 tons burden, long and sharp, with a fine tall mast fit for the king's galley. Her sail was of newest cloth, and stretched full thirty feet along the yard. On the body of it was painted in brilliant colours the picture of St. George overcoming the dragon; on either side was a fair broad bonnet to set in a light breeze, and on small poles before and after the mast could be set windwoopers of stout sailcloth, for use when the ship could bear the strain of so much canvas. In the forepart was a stage or castle, serving for protection to the mariners and also as a means of offence. At the afterpart was another castle, called, in contradistinction to the forecastle, the aftercastle, whereon the steersman stood, and under which were sleeping-places for the principal people. The sides of the ship were furnished with stout iron stanchions, to which were made fast, in the event of an attack, the pavises or shields, which were a defence to the company, and from behind which the bowmen could draw in comparative safety.

About two-thirds up the mast, which was fifty feet in height, was a box of wood capable of holding a dozen men, who could thence annoy an enemy, or get out on to the sail-yard for the purposes of the ship. Through the box went the stays of the mast, one running to the bowsprit, the other to the stern, and on either side were the ratlines and shrouds, made fast to deadman's eyes sunk in bulwarks of the ship. We had six banners and any number of small pennons, so that we could be gay with the gayest; our crew numbered a hundred good men, and, all in all, we justly considered the *Wanderer* to be one of the smartest escomers (foam-makers) that sailed out of the river. The vessels under my charge were of the same class but smaller, well found and manned; and

the entire squadron, though small for a warlike fleet, was as well equipped as any that had sailed since the battle of Espagnols-sur-Mer.

With a fair wind we were at Greenwich before dark, anchored, and with the early dawn we were again under way, reaching the Nore about noon.



CHAPTER XXI.

HOW WE DISCOVERED JOHN MERCER THE SCOT, AND WHAT
CAME OF THE DISCOVERY—A FIGHT AT SEA.

“Honour is purchased by the deeds we do.”

MARLOWE.

“Then, then, ye ocean warriors!
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow;
When the flery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow.”

CAMPBELL.



THE 20th of March, 1378,
was a day of uncommon
splendour—the harbinger
of spring—bright,
warm, and enlivening,
waking up the spirits
which had been torpid
all the winter, and
making the mere fact
of existence a source of
intense pleasure. Even
Brush, who had been
asleep on the aftercastle,
roused himself with un-
wonted readiness, as

eager to inquire the cause of the freshness in the air, and the meaning of Nature's rejoicing.

We were lying at anchor to the eastward of the great bank of

sand which intervenes between the river's mouth and the water which washes the Isle of Sheppey. A slight swell, the result of yesterday's strong breeze, wrinkled the face of the sea, and the action of a gentle breeze blowing from the north-east, while it did not disturb the waves, gave promise of our not being becalmed.

I was standing in the middle or waist of the ship, giving orders for the cleaning and arranging of her, when Oswald, who had charge of the forestage, came to me and reported a ligue, with five men in her, to be waiting on the dexter side (the starboard side) for leave to speak with the master.

"From what port do they hail?" I inquired.

"From Sandwich, they say," answered Oswald; and, taking me over to the side named, he showed me the boat, about ten yards off.

"Whence are you, my men?"

"Sandwich, master."

"Your business?"

"With the master of the ship."

"Run alongside, and come on board, then," I shouted.

And, in obedience to my invitation, the little vessel glided through the water, touched our side, and two of her crew stepped on to our deck.

"We are lodesmen, worshipful sir, who have sailed this morning from Sandwich," said the spokesman. "John Mercer the Scot is cruising in the Channel, and has twice summoned the town of Dover to surrender. Four Hastings craft have fallen into his hands, and he seems bent upon and strong enough for any amount of mischief. We heard from Walter Wart, who came from Sheerness last night, of your squadron coming down, and we made so bold as to put off and give you tidings of the rover's whereabouts. We saw his fleet of twenty-one ships this morning, at daylight, bearing away with a stiff breeze towards the coast of France, but we believe he means to go about again before he reaches Earl Godwin's land, and then to go on the other tack, so as to fetch a point not far from this. They say ten of his ships are Spanish."

"Thanks for your news, my friends," I said, "and take this money for your trouble. Oswald, give them some warm Burgundy, and let them get breakfast in the forecabin with the men."

And as the lodesmen went forward with Oswald, well content with the bounty they had received, I turned into my cabin to consult with D'Arcy what had best be done. In three minutes we had decided what to do, and in three more we were on board the Sandwichmen's boat, pulling for the *Merlin*, Philip Aubert's ship.

Philip was not long in making up his mind, for, after strictly examining the remaining lodesmen as to the number and position of the enemy's fleet, so as to guard himself against deception, and having found their account to agree exactly with that given by the men still on board our ship, he directed us to visit each vessel of the squadron, tell the masters the news we had heard, and order them to get their ships under way, and follow the *Merlin* and *Wanderer* in the same order as they had done yesterday in coming from Gravesend.

Though not, perhaps, strictly necessary, for all knew their work, he bade us draw the attention of the masters to the general instructions for the guidance of ships at sea, and particularly to those which say—

"That all manner of ships and vessels shall keep themselves as close around the admiral's ship as they well can, so that none be far ahead or astern the admiral's ship, except by order to the contrary, upon pain of being reported rebels, and so punished ;" and—

"In case that any ship or other vessel of the fleet perceive any vessel of the enemy on the sea, then he shall hoist a banner on high, whereby the admiral's ship and others of the fleet may have cognisance that he has seen one or more of the enemy's vessels, and so afterwards order the best they can to encounter them."

This we did, and at the end of an hour got on board our ship again.

The work of the ship being done, we all busied ourselves in preparing for action, for we knew that, if our information was correct, not many half-hours must elapse before we sighted him of whom

we were in pursuit. D'Arcy was occupied in seeing that the side shields or pavises were properly fixed in the stanchions of the bulwarks, taking particular care that those on the leeward side were thoroughly firm, as that was the side from which we intended, in case of an assault, to board the enemy, if we could manage to get the wind of him.

Oswald and I were engaged in bringing forth the arms from the store-room and apportioning them among the crew. Grim and hateful-looking things they were, some of them — which were intended for use in boarding. Long poleaxes, with spikes at the end of them, and a curved steel side, with which to catch the neck of a foeman and pull him overboard. Iron clubs with spiked balls connected to them by a chain, which were to be swung round the head, and then laid on to the skulls and faces of the enemy. Tarred brands with which to fire the ships after we should have succeeded in grappling them with our iron hooks. Then, besides our swords and poniards, we had boarding-axes — short, sharp things of terrible significance, crossbows and longbows, bolts and arrows in plenty, to say nothing of a goodly supply of heavy stones, which we raised by a rope and pulley to the topeastle on the mast, whence we designed to hurl them at the enemy at close quarters. Philip Aubert's ship and one other were furnished with "crakys of war" made of brass, and throwing leaden shot by means of powder, as the Spaniards had used at Rochelle and at the battle of Espagnols-sur-Mer, but they were not much in favour, being cumbersome and apt to burst, besides that the unfairness of such engines made them intolerable to brave men.

We steered nearly due west by the dial for upwards of an hour, the squadron keeping beautiful order. The look-out man in our topeastle was promised three marks of silver if he should first descry the enemy, and give the signal for flying the warning flag to the admiral, though his chance of winning was not the best that could be, for we were to windward of the other ships of the squadron, and the probability was, if the lodesman's conjecture proved true, that the enemy, tacking across from the leeward side of us, would be seen first by our consorts. Another hour and a

half, our ships going free, and in a course slightly altered to W. by S., we arrived off the coast near to where stands the Reculvers Church.

It was a morning of intense excitement. Every moment we expected the appearance of the warning flag—every moment my eye wandered from the horizon to the look-out man, and back again from the look-out to the horizon, till my brain ached with the mere process of watching. Oswald was as restless, if not more so: his journeys up the shrouds to the look-out place were to be counted by the dozen, and the signalman was almost ready to be uncivil between fear of losing his three marks and having to answer Oswald's numerous questions. D'Arcy and the helmsman, an old mariner, whose face was scorched with years of sun and whose beard had been brushed by every wind that blows, were the only men with cool heads on board, and they only concealed by the aid of experience the emotions they both felt. At half-past ten dinner was served, and with it I ordered an extra flegghe of wine to be given to each man, many drinking it as if they by no means deemed it to be the last some of them would quaff.

We had finished dinner, and, tired with waiting for the enemy who came not, were just beginning to conclude that the lodesmen had deceived themselves and us, when our ears were greeted with a shout which thrilled us with satisfaction. My moodiness vanished as at a magician's touch. We sprang on to the deck, and thence on to the aftercastle, and whilst the look-out kept giving his view-halloo from the masthead, our eyes made us aware of a long line of handsome vessels standing over towards the weather side of our fleet. At Philip Aubert's mast fluttered the warning flag.

"Answer the signal," I cried, "and make ready for action."

"He mustn't get the weather-gage of us, Master Hubert," said D'Arcy, who was standing by me, watching with grim smiles the long array of our adversary's ships, lying over towards the English coast.

"No fear," I answered, "though he's trying it on. He means

to cross us as far as he can, and then go about so as to bear down on us on the tack we are now going; but we'll put a stopper on that, any way."

Accordingly I gave orders to go about at once, so as to head Mercer's foremost ships, intending to fetch a point already fixed on in my mind, and then go about again and resume our previous course. This I knew would enable me, if I could do it in time, to bear down as I pleased on the first division of the enemy, whilst Aubert, keeping on the same tack as now, would be able to break the rear line and cut the fleet into two.

In ten minutes, or less time, we were about, and, letting the ship fall off a bit, though keeping her as close hauled as possible, I got her on the tack just mentioned, and so managed to head the foremost of the enemy's line. The other vessels of my division of course followed, so that while one part of our squadron was running nearly before the wind, and bearing down for the centre of the enemy's line, the other part was close hauled to the wind, and, as it were, running away.

Mercer understood the move, and, thinking to take advantage of it, signalled to his rearmost ships something of which we soon got to know the meaning. He thought to let me run on till it suited his purpose to stop from running with me, then, when his vessels should be pretty well up, to turn suddenly upon Philip Aubert's division, and tackle that before mine could come to his assistance. And my plan would have been a dangerous one if I had not soon understood his. We had run about a mile in this way when it was seen that Philip's leading ship must inevitably cut off the last five of Mercer's, they being unable to beat up past him fast enough. It was, therefore, time for the Scot to take measures to prevent his rearguard falling into the trap in which he had hoped to catch Philip or myself. Accordingly he hung out another signal to his fleet, the effect of which was that his ships in the middle and van went suddenly round, and bore down before the wind on the weather side of Philip's division.

No time was to be lost. I instantly gave orders to do the like, and in less time than our opponents had taken, the yards were

swung round on our masts, the starboard sheets shifted for larboard sheets, and away we went, ten bow-shots distant from the enemy, whom we could see on board their ships busily preparing for the fight which was now inevitable.

Mercer had followed me too far. Before he could come to the relief of his rearmost ships, Philip had laid aboard of them, and two had already changed owners by the fortune of war. This made the odds less formidable than they had been. We were now fourteen to nineteen, and with these numbers we went into action.

As we neared Mercer's main body, which was now inclosed between two lines of our ships, the bowmen on either side poured in their flights of arrows and bolts with stinging effect. The stones rattled against our breastplates, and the arrows hurtled through the air on their errand of death, now goring the bosom of some tall fellow, now spending their rage on the insensible timbers of the ships.

But this play could not last long, and in a short time after we came within range we lay aboard the Welfare, the ship which Mercer's lieutenant, Archibald Rack, commanded. Oswald, who had charge of the bowmen and stone-flingers, now redoubled his volleys so as to terrify the enemy; and, under cover of his storm of missiles, gave D'Arcy opportunity to fix the grappling-hooks, which were ready to hand on the larboard side of the ship. On D'Arcy's face I saw the old expression which had so much prejudiced me against him on the day we first met in Fleet Street, and which I knew, by the lesson taught that day, betokened a design to do mischief. Almost as soon as our beak grated along the side of the enemy's ship, which was one-third larger than the Wanderer, D'Arcy had fixed a grappling-hook into her, connected by a chain to a staple in our quarter, and in a few minutes more the two ships were firmly secured.

There was no doubt about it that a fierce fight must ensue. One or other vessel must speedily change owners, and on either one there seemed to be a strong determination to win and not lose. An attempt to board us was the commencement of the

fight. Archibald Rack himself, at the head of thirty good men, leaped from the bulwarks of his own ship on to our deck, and began a hand-to-hand fight for the possession of it. The struggle was sharp, and for a time doubtful. Our fellows laid about them with a right good will, but every man they killed was immediately replaced by a fresh arrival from the hostile ship. The men in our topcastle did not cease to send destruction on to the enemy's deck by means of bolts and stones; and we had the advantage that, so many of the Scots being on our deck, their friends were afraid to shoot on us lest they should chance to kill their own men.

Oswald, with a picked few, was stoutly contesting every plank of the forestage. His sword bit hard and often, and the keen axes of his men clove many a brave fellow from the forehead to the chin, before so much as a footing had been gained by the enemy.

D'Arcy was behaving like one possessed with a war-devil. With a heavy two-handed battle-axe he laid about him in the waist of the ship in such fashion as to keep the space within swing of his weapon as free as if no foe were on board. The ghastly evidences of his fury were conspicuous on the bodies of the boarders: horrid gashes that surgery could not heal yawned on shoulder, face, and chest; the corpses of the slain cumbered the footway, and he who would reach D'Arcy must do so across a rampart of carcases which his axe had stricken. I was maintaining a desperate fight in the afterpart of the ship, where old Block, the helmsman, and the Sandwich lodesmen (who had seen service with Sir Walter Manny and the Black Prince) were my faithful supports; and, in spite of the valour which shone around us, it seemed as though we must finally succumb, so brave and terrible was the attack, and so greatly were our crew outnumbered.

My determination to fight to the very last was in no way shaken, and my mind received a shock which, perhaps, nerved it to greater things, when just as our party had succeeded in driving overboard the last survivor of the assailants of the aftercastle, and we were about to rush forward to the aid of our friends, I

saw D'Arcy, who was covered with his own as well as enemies' blood, stagger and fall. The brave fellow had fought against fearful odds, and exacted by anticipation full price for his life; but, having performed prodigies, he could not do impossibilities; and, as I turned to help him, two spear-heads and a sword's point let out the life we sought to save. With a shout of savagery, wherein revenge had now its representative note, I rushed to the spot where my fallen friend lay, and, tripping up one, and flinging another man overboard, cleared a space round D'Arcy's body. He was quite dead. Archibald Rack's sword had pierced him through the heart—the last mischief that sword was fated to do, for as I saw Rack, sword in hand, panting for more, like some hound newly fed on flesh, and beckoning to a fresh body of assailants to make an entry on my deck, I caught up the axe with which poor D'Arcy had done so well, and, springing to where Rack stood, brained him on the spot.

I had noticed once or twice within the last quarter of an hour a strange sort of motion in the *Wanderer*, a spasmodic shake, which I attributed to the fact that she was fastened to another ship, but I now observed that she drew more water than before, and that, in truth, the sea was rapidly threatening to gain an entrance by the air-holes in the sides. A hurried look forward over the side showed me the meaning of it. The great anchor, which before the battle was secured inboard, had somehow or other got loose and over the side, so that the dangling points had knocked against the timbers as the vessel rocked, and punched a large hole just by the water-line. The ship had leaked, and the hole had increased without the fact being observed whilst the conflict raged. I now felt convinced that the *Wanderer* was sinking. Nor was this my only new trouble. The fight had been so fierce and so absorbent of attention, that I had failed to see what the other ships were doing or whither going. The *Wanderer's* sail had remained set, as had the sail of the Scot's ship, and under their combined influence we had drifted or sailed altogether out of our respective fleets, which lay more than half a mile behind us to leeward. With the sense of the danger came also the

remedy for it, and I lost not a second in seizing it. More than two-thirds of the enemy had quitted their ship, and were either dead or engaged on board the *Wanderer*. The slaughter of them had been so great that our numbers now exceeded theirs. Calling out to Oswald in the French tongue, which most of our men, but few of the Scots and Spaniards, understood, I gave orders to board the Scotch vessel, unloose the grappling-hooks, and keep the enemy in our ship.

Casting off with my own hand the chain which joined the vessels aft, I leaped, sword in hand, from the top of my aftercastle on to the deck of Archibald Rack's ship, followed immediately by the major portion of my crew. The enemy were taken by surprise in either vessel: those in the *Wanderer* did not think of such an attempt as one to carry their ship, and those in charge of it did not expect us on board, except, perhaps, as prisoners. Oswald had thoroughly imitated my example, and killing the man who, seeing what was intended, strove to prevent him, gained the forepart of the Scot with the remainder of his men.

The first thing I did was to run to the foot of the mast, and, without waiting for more regular operation, cut the halyards through with my sword. The yard and sail came lumbering down, the ship began to slacken her pace through the water, while the *Wanderer*, freed from her rival's embrace, with her sail still set, forged slowly ahead.

The men on our new ship, whereon I hoisted immediately the English flag, were soon overpowered, and, begging for mercy, were admitted to surrender. The poor *Wanderer*, with her ill-fated crew, lay sinking within thirty yards of us, an object of pity and concern. Apart from affection for the ship, we knew that on board of her were yet some of our own wounded, and we did not desire that even our enemies should be drowned like rats in a box. The *Welfare's* cockboat was at once got out, and rowed by some of my men to the side of the ship. Five of the wounded were brought away, and the boat returned for one load more. The unwounded men were bidden to swim for their lives, and those who could not swim launched themselves on spars

and casks. Just as the boat returned with her second ghastly freight, the Wanderer was seen to give a tremendous lurch, and, as it were, to stagger forwards. Immediately afterwards, amid the shrieks of some yet on board of her, she dipped her bow for the last time, and went down head foremost.

No time was lost in splicing the haulyards on the Welfare. The sail was rehoisted, the ship put round, and we were not long ere we rejoined the fleet.

The battle was nearly over. The diversion caused by taking off the Welfare, on which Mercer had relied as upon the best and largest ship in his fleet, had very much facilitated the settlement of affairs. Philip Aubert had engaged Mercer's and another cog, and, after converting the three ships into slaughter-houses, had captured his antagonists. Every other ship in the squadron had done its work well, so that out of twenty-one ships which assailed us in the morning, five only escaped to tell the tale of their disaster.

The loss in killed and wounded had been very heavy on either side, and our victory, splendid though it was, was not unattended by regrets. D'Arcy was gone, having died like a soldier; Philip Aubert was badly wounded by an arrow in the side; Oswald was gashed frightfully with a sword-cut across the leg and thigh; many more of our captains were killed or severely hurt; and the loss of men of commoner sort was extraordinarily great. The ships were manned by less than two-thirds of the numbers that had handled them in the morning, and those who survived bore marks which many of them would carry to their graves.

Proudly, but sadly, we took possession of our prizes, and sailed from the scene of action for the place whence we started.

CHAPTER XXII.

WE COME BACK NOT EMPTY-HANDED, AND ARE WELL RECEIVED BY THE PEOPLE; BUT MASTER PHILPOT IS SENT FOR TO THE COUNCIL.

"I'll keep them all!
By heaven, he shall not have a Seot of them;
No, if a Seot would save his soul, he shall not:
I'll keep them, by this hand."

Henry IV.



THE wind had shifted round since the morning, and as we prepared to sail home it blew with steady force from west by south. Under its kindly influence we ran along the Kentish coast, and entered the river soon after dark. Abreast of the little village on the southern point of the Essex shore we cast anchor and lay quiet for the night. Thoroughly worn out, and unmindful for the time of the losses we had suffered or the glory we had gained, we eagerly availed ourselves of the friendly cover of night; and no longer fevered by the excitements through which we had passed, we laid us down to rest and slept the sleep of tired men. Even I, whom duty kept from slumber till care had been had for the due safety of the ship, did not long withhold from my aching head the precious balm of sleep which is the medicine for so many human ills.

The next morning, as soon as it was light, a signal was made from Philip Aubert's ship directing us to continue our journey. Anchors were weighed, sails loosened, and, with bodies refreshed and hearts gladdened by repose, we looked forward to our entry into London with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow.

It was impossible not to feel something of the triumph which we had achieved swelling our hearts, saddened and hurt as they

were by the losses we had sustained. I speak, at least, for myself. There were those among us who had been familiar with bloodshed all their lives, to whom a corpse was but the body of one who, save for the fortune of war, would have made corpses of them, whose sensitiveness had been blunted by long acquaintance with brutality, and who would not have hesitated to carve their dinner with the blade which just before had served to kill a man.

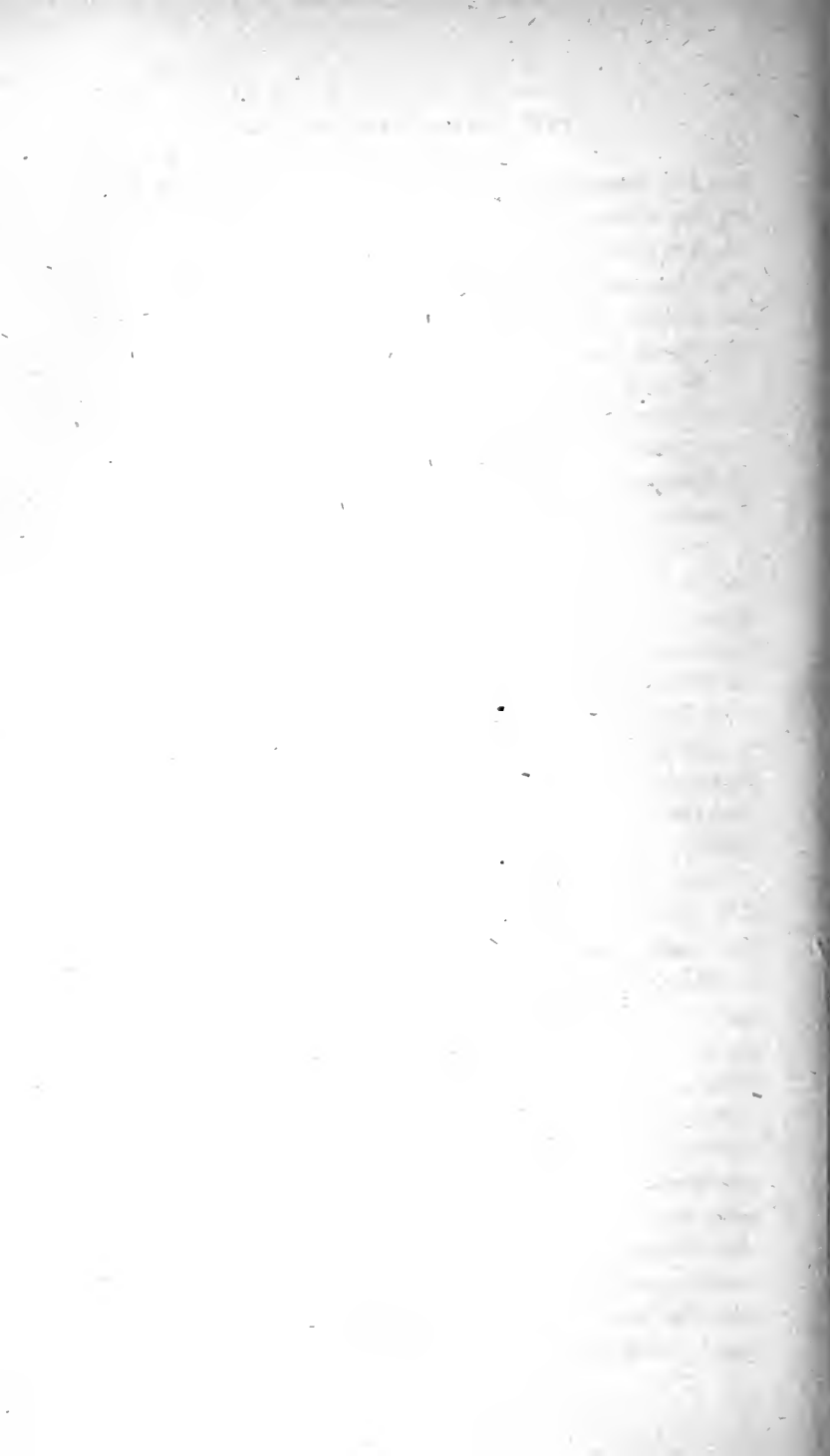
I was, however, new to carnage on such a scale—indeed, in the affair of Peter's Haven I had fleshed my maiden sword—so that the impression which the hacking and slaying in Mercer's fight made upon me was deep and shocking. First impressions in all things, especially of this sort, are abiding; and I feel to this hour the shock which I received when D'Arcy fell dying on the deck amid a heap of bleeding men.

As we passed Gravesend, Dartford, Greenwich, and Rotherhithe, the people put off in their boats to bid us welcome and to give us joy of the victory we had gained, so that by the time we neared London our fleet was increased by innumerable boats of all sizes, gaily decked in honour of the occasion. Our own ships were dressed out too with all the flags and streamers we could muster—the City banner, Master Philpot's flag, the royal standard, and the distinguishing pennon of each ship, besides the colours taken from the foe, fluttered from our mastheads. Andrew Block, the helmsman, wanted to paint the St. George upon our sail, as it had been on the Wanderer's trifle, in order, as he suggested, "to puzzle the people more;" but, besides that time would not admit of meddling with such an affair, I was unwilling to sail under false pretences, and having lost the Wanderer honourably, I declined to borrow from her plumes to deck her successor.

At seven o'clock in the evening we dropped anchor at Billingsgate. Light boats and luges which had pulled on ahead had given notice of our coming, and there on the stairs to meet us were Master Philpot and Alice, Walworth, Barnes (Oswald's father), and most of the chief merchants and magistrates of the city. The lord mayor was not present, but small pain did his absence cause us, for we knew how to interpret the sign it gave,



THE CITIZENS WELCOME THE VICTORIOUS RETURN OF MASTER PHILPOT'S FLEET.



whereas we should have been at a loss to understand any attempt of his to receive us cordially.

As I landed and stepped forward to shake the extended hand of my dear master, who expressed in his one sentence of welcome more than many could have conveyed in an hour's speech, I noticed amid the general throng of pleasure-lighted faces one scowling face with unfriendly look, which I had no difficulty in recognising as Sir John Arundel's. He had no cause to love me, and I less to love him. I had been the occasion, though not the cause, of his ludicrous mishap a few days before, and he had been baffled in an attempt to seize upon me—an attempt which, if successful, would have consigned me to indefinite imprisonment as the punishment for my contempt in assaulting two persons so considerable as the Lord Mayor of London and a privy councillor of the king. It was more than he dared to do to seize me now; the people were too many for him; and any attempt to arrest me would infallibly have caused for him similar or worse treatment than that Sir Walter Hood experienced when he killed Will Allein's horse in Smithfield. He stood there like the fly in the apothecary's ointment, the representative of the ounce of bitter in the pound of sweet—a sort of *memento mori* to prevent any excess of joying in the triumph. A shudder ran through me as he smiled and scowled on me both at once; the words asking forgiveness rose to my lips, but were as promptly suppressed by reason, which bade me not seek to turn away a revengeful man's wrath by publicly alluding to the cause of it. I only bowed, therefore, to him, and soon forgot in the congratulations of my friends the apprehensions of evil which Sir John Arundel's presence had inspired.

There was also another reason why I should be indifferent to Sir John Arundel or any other like him. Alice Philpot stood by her father, looking like what she was—the most winsome, lovable, sweetest maiden in all London. And she had an interest in our expedition beyond, as I hoped, the mere defeat of the pirate. I was vain enough to imagine that she was specially glad I had come back safe from the dangers of the sea and the violence of the enemy; and certainly, on my part, I thought it ample reward for

all, that in Alice's eyes the service was a pleasing one, and that she was there to welcome us back and to lend the smile of her bright face to swell the glory of our triumph. I wished to think that I had fought in my lady's name and for her sake, and, after the manner of knights errant, to lay my sword at the feet of my mistress. But this would have looked odd to the people of Billingsgate, and even Alice herself might not have understood the drift of it; so contenting myself with the heartfelt pleasure of having won at the same time the approval of my master and of my heart's mistress, I forewent that other of doing like the knight of whom Master Geoffrey Chaucer told us in the "Knight's Story" among the *Canterbury Tales*.

Philip Aubert received, as was his due, the public thanks of Philpot, who had sent him forth. The magistrates and merchants pressed about him to tell him what they thought of his having destroyed the common enemy; while the people, whose particular interests were not concerned in the roving or the capture of John Mercer, shouted their approval of gallantry which had not withdrawn from battle with a largely superior force, and had not so much considered the numbers of the enemy as the fact that they were present and had to be fought. The wounds on Philip and poor Oswald excited the commiseration of the crowd, especially of the womankind, who cried out far more than the wounded themselves had done, and exclaimed upon the wickedness and devilish nature of the Scots and enemies of England in general. Oswald's father took him off at once to have his hurts tended at his own house; and I, having left the old helmsman in charge of the Welfare, was just about to walk away with Alice and my master, when an altercation arose on a question of Philip Aubert's, which did not end till it was settled at the Council board.

Philip had asked, naturally enough, what he was to do with John Mercer and his other prisoners, of whom there were several hundreds in the fleet. Philpot, it seems, had not forethought this question when he fitted out the expedition. He had had a single eye to the capture or destruction of the pirate, and had not weighed in his mind the nice considerations which must of neces-

sity arise as to whose the prisoners would be ; nor, more important still, had he reckoned whether he might lawfully take prisoners at all.

"Where am I to bestow the captives, your honour?" said Philip. "There's a many of them on board."

"I hardly know, Philip," answered Philpot. "I have no place for them. How many are there, do you think?"

"Over three hundred, your honour," replied Philip; "and John Mercer is among them."

"Perhaps they had better be sent to the Marshalsea till order can be taken about them," suggested Walworth.

"Or they might be kept on board the ship," said another.

"Or hanged for Scotch thieves, as they are," added a third.

But Sir John Arundel, who up to this time had not uttered a word, now broke in to settle the question by claiming the prisoners himself, as earl marshal, in the king's name. But Philip had an eye to ransom, and, moreover, cared as little for Sir John on land as for Sir John on board his ship; so he declined his jurisdiction, and, without noticing his speech, asked for orders from his own master.

Philpot begged Sir John Arundel not to take amiss the roughness of Philip, saying that he was a seaman, more accustomed to deal with the blustering winds and uncouth mariners than with nobles and gentlemen; and Philip Aubert himself, who meant no offence, though he did not mean to be interfered with, added, by way of explanation, that while Master Philpot was his master, he took his orders from him and from no one else.

Sir John professed himself satisfied, though his sinister, harsh look contrasted him ill with the open, good-natured sailor before him; and then, turning to Philpot, once more claimed the prisoners in the king's name.

"To say truth, Sir John Arundel, I am at a loss how to answer you," said Philpot. "The expedition was fitted out at my cost, conducted by my servants, and carried out at my risk. I had thought to let the men of baser sort go free, and admit the leaders to ransom for the benefit of the captors."

"That may not be," answered Arundel. "All enemies taken belong to the king, and for his Majesty's benefit must their ransoms be."

"I'd as soon set them adrift myself as let such as had no hand in the taking of them profit," added Aubert.

"Peace, good Philip!" said my master. "It becomes you not to speak so when the king's Majesty is concerned."

"I have a score to settle with him already, and with yon lad too," said Arundel fiercely, pointing to me; "and, by Mary, it shall be paid to the utmost jot! But, now, your answer, Master Philpot—shall I have your prisoners?"

"Nay, that he shall not," said Philip. "I'll take them all home to Scotland myself rather."

"You *must* be quieter, good Philip," said Philpot. "We must do what the law will have us do. If the prisoners belong of right to his Majesty, it is impossible for us to withhold them."

"Nay, but for Sir John, who never saw the head of one of them, to claim them all! I think that *is* fine! And then he says he has a score to settle with me. Let him but wait till my hurts are better, and, putting his knighthood aside, I doubt he'll care to call me to account," said Philip, now grown very angry.

"The fellow is drunk," said Arundel, "or I might notice his talk. I cannot bandy words with a mariner, though I will teach him how he should speak to a gentleman another time, if he gives any more of it."

Master Philpot, aware that Philip was in the wrong, commanded him to be silent, and begged Sir John once more not to take amiss what in a moment of excitement his servant had said. Anxious to change the character of the conversation, he told the earl marshal that, since his office entitled him, he should have the prisoners.

"They are at your disposal whenever you choose to send for them. I commend them to the leniency of his Majesty, and hope, at least, that the poorer men shall be held blameless, as I would hold them. Philip, you shall not lose, nor you, nor you," added he, turning to others of his shipmasters who had now assembled

round us. "I will ransom you your prisoners if his Majesty do not see fit to waive his claim."

Arrangements were then made for the surrender of John Mercer and the others who were of note, whilst, in accordance with Master Philpot's suggestion, the common folk went free.

We then left the wharf, and amid the shouts of the populace, who revered Philpot as if he had been their father, we passed on to our dear old house, where preparations had been made to give us a hearty welcome.

An ample banquet was spread in the Magna Charta room, to which a number of the principal citizens had been bidden, and to which we proceeded to do justice. From Philip Aubert's mouth came the story of the Wanderer and the Welfare; and it was not without a sense of pride, which I trust was an honest one, that I received the congratulations and applause of the assembled guests. Lord Fitzwater and Sir Robert Knollys, who were both present, took occasion to say many obliging things to me, and I valued their approval at the high rate it was worth, coming from such tried and able commanders, who were, moreover, known to be chary of bestowing praise.

We fought the battle over again as we sat at supper; old Walter Bell, who had fought at *Espagnols-sur-Mer*, and was allowed, therefore, to be an authority in sea affairs, showing by the aid of a number of plates and ladles, which he made to represent the opposed fleets, how this manœuvre should have been done and that line broken, this division laid athwart that, and what position the admiral's ship should have taken.

Whilst Aubert told how the day had been won, giving me over-large credit for the stratagem which had deceived the enemy and broken his line—while I told of Oswald, absent from us by reason of his hurts, and related how bravely poor D'Arcy fell in the execution of his duty—the evening wore away, and it was not till two hours after curfew that the company separated, and we, wearied by exertion and the excitement of the day, retired to rest, thanking God for the abundant mercies He had shown to us.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE COUNCIL IN THE TOWER—I AM INTRODUCED TO SIR HUGH CALVERLEY, WHO PROMISES TO TAKE ME NEXT TIME HE GOES TO SEA.

“Speak to the business, Master Secretary,
Why we are met in council.”

Henry VIII.

“A knight there was, and that a worthy man.”

CHAUCER.



THE morning afterwards I was on foot betimes, and paid an early visit to my friend Oswald. His wounds were painful but not dangerous, and the surgeon gave us hope of seeing him again amongst us in the course of another three weeks. I told him all that has been narrated in the last chapter—how his conduct had been applauded, and how well pleased Master Philpot was—news which was equal to at least six doses of Mistress Barnes’s simples, so far as doing good to the patient was concerned.

I returned thence to my master. Whilst we were sitting at breakfast, he telling me what he meant to do with the captured prizes—which, as he said, nothing should make him give up to the king—came one of the royal messengers from the palace in the Tower with a message for Master Philpot to attend the Council forthwith. We went together, for I did not like the notion of the dear old man being made to encounter alone and unsupported the charges and reproaches which we guessed would be made against him.

Master Philpot leaning on my arm, we walked together down East Cheap into Thames Street, and so by Allhallows Church on

to Tower Hill. The messenger and two of Philpot's servants accompanied us. The warders at the gateway having demanded our business, and being shown the Council's order directing my master to come, admitted us with many tokens of respect and service, for they knew the quality of Philpot, and took him for the worthy man he was. The drawbridge across the moat being lowered, we crossed over to the head of Traitors' Gate, and continuing our course past the Lion's Tower, came to the door at the foot of the staircase leading to the Council-chamber in the White Tower. I shall have later to speak of the fortress more particularly, and will not now stop to describe it. Suffice it here to say that the White Tower is the castle keep, containing the royal apartments and chapel of St. John, the state prisons, the torture-rooms, and the offices and chamber of Council.

At the outer door of this last we stopped. The ancient of the guard demanded to know our business, and, being informed of it, led us at once to the interior of the building. Ascending the winding stair, the downward continuation of which led to far different abodes—places wherein, as Dante, the poet of Florence, saith of another place, all who enter must leave hope behind them—we came to the massive oak door, loaded with iron rings and bolts, which was the Council-chamber door. After a brief interval, in which the officer announced our arrival, we were admitted to the presence of the Council.

The sight of Sir Nicholas Brembre, Sir John Arundel, Sir Simon Burley, and the Earl of Stafford, seated among the others at the board, showed us at a glance that we must not expect compliments.

The room itself was a handsome one—thirty feet by twenty-five—with groined stone roof, supported on massive pillars, and fairly lighted by two high windows looking on to the courtyard and Tower Green. Across them ran heavy bars of iron, studded at the points of junction with sharp spikes, which, pointing both outwards and inwards, made the windows quite impracticable either for ingress or egress. The floor was of polished oak, strewed, where the members of the council were sitting, with fresh rushes.

The walls were hung with tapestry, faded and rusty from the effects of the smoke emitted from a large brazier which warmed the room, and which, there being no chimney, sent up into the apartment a smoke that was supposed to find an exit through the top panes of the windows.

As soon as the officer left the room, Philpot advanced to the table, bowed to the gentlemen around it, and, exchanging signs of recognition with Sir Robert Knollys and Sir Thomas Percy, who were also of the Council, inquired the cause of his summons before them.

The Earl of Stafford, who presided, and at whose instance Master Philpot had been sent for, gave him his answer.

"It has come to our knowledge," said he, "that of your own discretion you have thought fit to send an armed fleet against the Scots. Who gave you authority to do this?"

"No one," answered Philpot, "but in the public interest I sought to remove a common evil.

"Did you not know that the keeping of the seas had been committed to the admirals and other noblemen?" returned the earl, with an emphasis on the last word the meaning of which could not be mistaken.

"I knew it had been committed to the admirals," answered Philpot, not noticing, further than by omitting Stafford's last words, the sneer which they conveyed; "but I thought those gentlemen were otherwise employed, since the seas were so ill kept."

"That might be subject of complaint, Master Philpot, but no ground for you to accroach the royal authority by levying war," interposed Sir John Arundel, who longed for an opportunity to say a spiteful thing to this good Englishman.

"In the late king's time," said Sir Nicholas Brembre, "such an act was construed to be high treason."

"Lord Mortimer's case was not like this," said Sir Robert Knollys. "It can scarcely be said that Master Philpot assumed the royal power. Why did he not give up his prisoners to Sir John Arundel there, as soon as they were demanded? Let

us not strain the matter to a length it cannot properly go, Sir Nicholas."

"I did but as one troubled with vermin does — seek to destroy them," rejoined my master, "and vexed not my mind with the means so the end were attained. Mercer I judged not to be the king's enemy so much as mine and my brethren's; and as I should not ask his Majesty to redress a private wrong that I myself could remedy, so in this case I deemed it lawful not to trouble his Majesty's Council with a small matter of this sort. But know this," said he, waxing warm at the number and sharpness of the questions put to him, "that, beyond all doubt, I did not offer my money and my friends to the dangers and perils of the sea that I might snatch from you or your colleagues a fair military name, or that I might get profit to myself; but I pitied the people and the miserable condition of the country, which, through your slothfulness, is fallen from the rank of noblest kingdom and queen amongst nations, into such misery that she lies open to the insult of any people, however vile. There was not one of you who stretched out his hand in her defence, and therefore I exposed me and mine to danger for the common safety and for the salvation of my country."

These words, delivered without loss of temper, with much dignity, and with such weight of truth, struck even malice dumb. Sir Hugh Calverley, the brave Governor of Calais, with Sir Robert Knollys and Sir Thomas Percy, openly testified their approbation of the speech, and Sir John Arundel and the Earl of Stafford, feeling entirely the truth of the libel, ceased to make any further attack on Philpot. He remained standing in the place where he had spoken till Sir Robert Knollys requested him to sit, and explained to him, in a far different tone to that adopted by the Earl of Stafford, the difficulties which had arisen in respect of the prisoners and the spoil taken from the Scot.

"For the prisoners," said Philpot, "Sir John Arundel knows well I surrendered them as soon as he demanded them, asking only that the pains of those who took them might not go unrewarded. For the spoil," added he, "I deem it my own, saving

that which erewhile belonged to other merchants who have been robbed; and, though I make not much account of the matter, I pray your lordships not to be over-hard on me, who can scarcely be reckoned to have done the state disservice."

"Far from it, Master Philpot," broke in Sir Hugh Calverley, "the state has good cause to be beholden to you. Would we could find such mettle as you have in your fleet amongst our lads of Calais! I flatter myself that then King Richard's title in France would be as good as his who asserted it at Cressy."

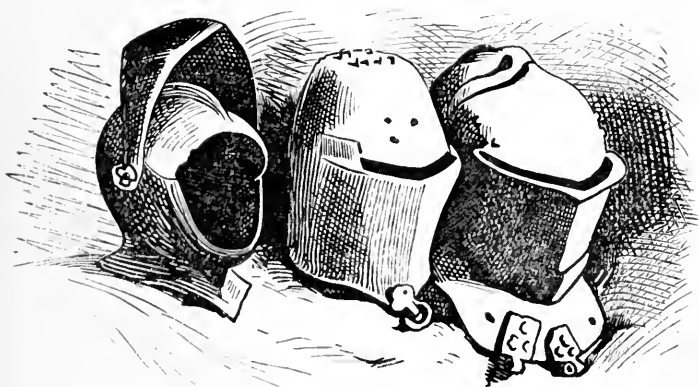
"Here," said Philpot, pointing to where I stood, "is a specimen of what our citizen lads are. This youngster commanded the Wanderer for me, and lost her, bringing me in exchange a cog twice as large, which he captured."

"I heard of the affair," said Sir Hugh; "'t was right bravely done." And, coming forward to where I stood, the rough soldier shook me warmly by the hand, adding to what he had spoken many kind and complimentary words, which, though I remember, modesty will not suffer me to write down. He promised to let me know the next time he went to sea in performance of the duty which had exercised him all his life—of fighting Frenchmen; and, not content with forecasting generous things for the future, he insisted in the present that Sir Nicholas Brembre and Sir John Arundel should overlook the way in which they had been damaged through me, and his blunt, honest manner so far prevailed over the opposite in these men, that, by profession at least, they freely forgave me all I had done.

By means of this friendly aid borne to my master and me, our interview with the Council ended less unpleasantly than we had expected. It was arranged that prisoners of poor condition should be set free without payment in money or person, and that in consideration of the ships captured being allowed to remain with Philpot, the prisoners of importance should be held to ransom for the benefit of the king. And so, after an anxious hour spent in making the arrangements, we once more passed through the massive door of the Council-chamber, descended the stone staircase, and found our way on to Tower Green.

As soon as we had quitted the gates of the fortress, the people, who by this time had got to know the errand on which we had gone, and waited with anxiety for our coming, crowded around us, throwing their caps into the air, and giving such hearty cheers of welcome to my master, whom they loved as he deserved, as were heard within the thick walls of the sombre chamber we had left.

Without intending it, we became the objects of a public display. The people—men of all sorts, from the substantial citizen to the merest wretch who knew not the difference between mine and thine—thronged around us, and from Tower Hill to our house in East Cheap followed a motley procession of hearty creatures who understood the value of the service Philpot had done, and desired to testify to all the world, and the king's Council in particular, their appreciation of the men who shrank not from working for the common weal.



CHAPTER XXIV.

THE FALCON OF FOWEY.

"Morthur wil out, certeyn it wil nat fayle."

Prioress' Tale.



ON the evening of this day Sir Hugh Calverley came to sup with my master in East Cheap.

Long acquaintance had ripened into friendship between the two, and whilst Oswald and I were staying at Battle, the knight became a frequent visitor at Philpot's house. This was the first time I had seen him, excepting at the brief interview we had had that morning in the Tower.

Sir Hugh Calverley was essentially a soldier; not of the cruel sort — though sometimes he could be stern — but of the frank, open-hearted, generous order, which delights in manliness and noble deeds, for their own as much as for fame's sake.

It was impossible not to like him at sight. There was that in his countenance which enlisted the affections immediately in his behalf. He was a guileless, truth-loving man, and in his face was stamped honesty as plain to see as his nose. In height he was some five feet, nine inches; he was broad shouldered, and stout of limb. His complexion was fair but sunburnt, his eyes were large and blue, and his hair, which was wavy, was of a flax colour, and lay about his handsome head in orderly confusion. His dress was simple and of good material, consisting of a tightly-fitting doublet of buff-coloured cloth, with full sleeves to the wrists, instead of being made to hang from the elbow in accordance with the fashion. He wore a broad belt, in which was hung his sword;

his trunk hose were of white cloth edged with red, and he wore long white stockings and buff-leather shoes.

He had seen a good deal of service with the Free Companies, and had fought for Henry the Bastard against Pedro the Cruel. He had served under the Black Prince in France and Spain, and for his worth was intrusted with the government of Calais. His last great exploit was his ravaging expedition against the French at Boulogne, and his valiant recapture of the castle of Merke, concerning which last all men yet talked as of one of the boldest things done in the century.

On this particular evening he and Master Philpot sat in the Magna Charta room, talking of old times, and of men they had both known who were now no more, when incidentally Philpot happened to mention, in connection with the recent capture of John Mercer, that the audacity of the Flemings seemed to have been less since the time they were surprised by the ghost of the Falcon of Fowey.

"Ah! that was a strange affair," said Sir Hugh; "let murderers do what they will, murder will out."

"I believe it did so there," observed Philpot, "in a somewhat marvellous way, though, to tell you the truth, I never heard the rights of the story."

"No?" inquired the other, almost doubtingly. "Why, it made noise enough at the time."

"Yes," answered Philpot, "but in the noise the narrative was lost, or very much distorted. I should like to hear the true version, if you have a mind tell it."

"That I will with pleasure," said Sir Hugh, who dearly loved to re-fight his battles and to recount things done—not that he might glorify himself thereby, for of himself he ever spoke modestly, but because he loved his profession, and took pleasure in speaking of acts belonging to it.

By way of preliminary, Peter Wall was summoned and desired to bring a flagon of Master Philpot's very best Burgundy, and place it on the bench within reach of the knight's arm, for Sir Hugh was apt in talking to grow husky, and experience told him

that on such occasions there was no remedy so efficacious as a long pull at the tankard.

After a gentle pull at the flagon, just to reassure his throat, and with a premonitory hem! or two, Sir Hugh Calverley thus delivered:

“The circumstances under which the Falcon was captured were briefly these.

“Before I was made admiral of the western seas, a certain barge of Fowey, named the Falcon, had been deputed with others to act as guard off the coast of Cornwall, and better men than Fowey men there could not be for such a purpose. Dartmouth, though she is beginning to set up as a rival, is not Fowey’s match, for all the mishaps that have come upon the latter place during the last five years. Ask a Frenchman which he would rather tackle, a lad of Fowey or a Dartmouth man, and he will make you a shrewd answer in favour of the last.

“Well, when I entered on my new duties the time allotted to this barge had run out, and the mariners proposed to take her back into port. But, seeing that she was a handy craft, and that her men were excellent sailors, I wanted very much to keep the vessel in my squadron, and made some handsome offers to the master to induce him to stay; but the master declared that his men were tired out, the provisions exhausted, and the ship herself in need of much repair, and thereupon refusing the offers made to him, he left me to return to Fowey. His true object was, not that he might relieve his men or retire altogether from the sea service, but merely that he might get fresh food and a new mast, so as to be able to cruise about on his own account. He did not care to divide the spoil with other ships, and his cupidity was the means of bringing about its own punishment, at the same time that it brought to light the wickedness of these Flemings.

“The Falcon left me some miles off the coast and proceeded on her voyage, making for Fowey, whilst I and my ships sailed away in search of evildoers. Scarcely had the ships lost sight of each other when the Cornish men, it seems, were aware of a large Flemish bark, under mainsail and double bonnets, bearing down

towards the Falcon. The time was about the hour of vespers, and the English were making ready to lie snug for the night.

"Down came the Fleming, a cog twice the size of the Falcon, with her decks crowded fore and aft by armed men, or, as Master Walsingham says of her in the account he has written, 'laden with oath-breakers, filled with the cruel, and freighted with the impious.' From the manner in which she came along it was perfectly clear there must be a collision. The Fleming was running before the wind, the Falcon lying up about nine points away from it, and though the latter, seeing the other ship close, fell off a bit so as to try and avoid the smash, the former held on her course till within hailing distance, and then bidding the Englishmen strike their sail, prepared to run aboard of them.

"Not more than twenty minutes had elapsed from the time the Fleming was first seen till the time she came up with the Falcon, but in that interval the crew of the Falcon had found, as they imagined, good cause to suspect her character, and having armed themselves with such weapons as were handy, were quite ready to make a stubborn resistance. The only answer made to the order to strike sail was an earnest attempt to get to windward, but the ship would not lie close enough up to enable her to get the weather side of the enemy (for such she evidently was), and in a few minutes the prow of the Flemish vessel struck the Falcon abaft the forecastle, and immediately all was confusion.

"The mast, which had been long in the ship and wanted renewing, snapped off at the foot, and down came the wreck of it, with the yard and sail, on to the deck, the bulwarks fell inwards, the hull was found to be pierced, and the water rushed in on to the deck.

"If there had been any doubt as to the character of the Flemish ship, it was speedily removed by the descent of a score of her crew on to the deck of the Falcon. Sword in hand, and with shouts that made the night hideous, they threw themselves upon the encumbered Englishmen, and a combat ensued in which it seemed as if the combatants grudged each other the short space of life the elements were willing to accord them, and strove to lessen the

time which intervened between them and inevitable death. The whole crew of the *Falcon* did not exceed fifty; of these five had been killed or knocked overboard by the falling mast, and several more were severely injured. In spite of the fury of the attack, and of the overpowering reinforcements which continued to come over the side of the vessel, the *Falcon's* men were true to their charge and themselves. Scorning to surrender, and doubtful, perhaps, of finding grace if he did so, the master shouted to his fellows to remember who they were, whilst he himself gave sterling proofs of valour which the Flemings did not expect. The *Falcons*, besides being English, were Cornish, and laid about them in true Cornish style, and of the score Flemings who descended first on to the *Falcon's* deck, fifteen were accounted for in less than that number of minutes.

“John Braddon, the master, with a huge chopper, smote terribly, and took deep vengeance for each of his men slain the moment the debt became due. The blows fell thick on all sides, and blood flowed freely, the deck was slippery with gore and sea-water, night was closing in, and the *Falcon* was sinking. Little more than ten minutes had gone since the collision took place, and in that time some thirty men were dead, as many more lay dying, and a common ruin seemed about to overtake every soul on board the *Falcon*. The Flemings did not want the ship to sink, at least until they had removed sufficient plunder to recompense them for the trouble they were taking. In order to prevent the catastrophe they threw enough men on to the English ship to occupy the attention of every man who could fight, whilst others of their number sought to stanch the wound their ship had made in the *Falcon's* side.

“What could courage do against overpowering force? A resistance so brave had been made that the Flemings, when reflection time came, would think the prize less valuable than the cost of it; many of their number had been sent to their account, and unless great haste were made many more must perish, and the coveted prize as well. Victory passed to the inhuman and the cruel; John Braddon, tired with his exertions, had at length

succumbed, and lay dead on his own aftercastle. The others who remained, wounded or not, were flung into the sea, and, as the Flemings thought, there remained not any one of the Falcon's crew to tell the tale of what had been done. The hole in the side was stopped with bales and cloths, and the flow of water in some degree stayed. The vessel was ransacked for what might be in her, and the booty collected upon the wreck-strewn deck, whence the Flemings handed it up to their fellows who remained on their own ship. With savage cries, mixed with frightful curses, did these lawless wretches pursue their work, inflaming their brutish senses with large stoups of wine, which they found handy in the forepart of the ship. They had not succeeded in getting more than a few bales of stuff on to the Flemish ship when the stops in the Falcon's side were forced by the sea; in rushed the water again with tremendous sweep, widening the breach in its haste to enter, and ere the half-drunken Flemings, of whom five-and-twenty were yet on board, could leave the ship, the Falcon, weighed down by the ghosts of her murdered crew, sank below the waves, carrying with her the shrieking wretches who struggled in vain to get free.

"This was the scene upon which night actually closed. The Flemings lay to till morning dawned, and then, thinking to replenish their ship and to sell the few things they had captured, sailed away for the English coast.

"They had sunk the Falcon and taken a few things out of her, giving in exchange little less than half of their crew. They had, moreover, with them, though unknown, another relic of the ill-fated ship, which it is possible they would rather have dispensed with.

"John Braddon of Fowey had a son, a lad not more than thirteen years of age, whom he took to sea with him, and trained to become a sailor in his turn. The boy had been with him on this voyage, and had of course been present at the fight above described. Though he might have had the spirit, he had not the sinews, of his father, and in an early stage of the combat he had been thrown down, and only escaped a sword-thrust or a lance's poke by hiding

away beneath the fallen sail, where he remained until the ship began to sink. Then it seems he crept out of his cover, and catching hold of a rope which lay between the two vessels, hauled himself up on to the Flemish ship. The darkness and confusion aided him, and knowing what his fate would be if he should happen to be recognised for a stranger, he got below, and hid himself in the sink, where he remained without provisions for three days. On the third day the Flemings made the port of Plymouth, and, running in, began to make their purchases and to refit. Young Braddon in his hiding-place knew the ship was in port, but knew not what port it was, and it was not till he heard the sound of his native tongue that he perceived he was near England at all. Nearly dead with hunger and anxiety, the poor boy picked up courage when he found he was in an English harbour, and creeping out of the foul place where he had hidden, and rushing on deck, to the surprise of all—for none knew he was on board—he cried aloud in English for protection, and besought some of the Plymouth men who were standing on the wharf to save him from the bloody-handed Flemings.

“The master of the ship was chaffering for the sale of the bales taken from the Falcon when this strange apparition appeared on his deck. He was standing out for a higher price, and explaining away the blood-marks which appeared on the bales by saying that the cook had been careless in killing a pig, and had spilt some of the blood upon the cargo, when young Braddon came to tell the whole history I have narrated.

“The Flemings, who partly understood what the boy said, grew frightened at this shape of the accusing angel, and whilst the unlikelihood of the story would have made the Englishmen discredit it, the fear and superstition of the Flemings made them confess. Then the whole story came out, and by consequence the pirates were seized with their ship, the latter being forfeited wholly to the king.

“It so happened that about this time I had occasion to run into port for provisions and water, and to deliver up some of the prizes we had taken on the open sea. Coming into Plymouth, I found

these prisoners, who, with their accuser Braddon, were at once handed over to me.

“It is, of course, needless to tell you that we made a full and searching investigation into this foul business, but remorse, which struck the hearts of some of the actors in it, saved us much trouble, for the wretches confessed their guilt and begged for mercy, from the gift of which their conduct had, however, shut them out.

“It was not a pleasant bit of work, but an example had to be made. We hanged them all at Plymouth, as a warning to the likes of them; and, as you say, friend Philpot, their countrymen seem to have profited by the lesson.”

Here Sir Hugh Calverley took a final haul on to the tankard, which he had frequently favoured in the course of his recital; and declining to have it replenished, as Master Philpot begged him to do, he bade us heartily good night, and went off to his lodgings.

I have digressed thus much from the course of my memoirs in order to show how insecure the seas were. In the next chapter I propose again to introduce you to an old acquaintance.



CHAPTER XXV.

JOHN WYCLIF IN TROUBLE AGAIN—HOW HE APPEARED BEFORE
THE SYNOD AT LAMBETH, AND HOW THE LONDONERS PUT
AN END TO THE SITTING.

“ ‘ He schal no gospel glosen here ne teche,
We leven al in the gret God,’ quod he;
‘ He wolden sowen som difficultee,
Or springen cockle in our clene corne.’ ”

The Schipmanne's Tale.



ORE than a year had passed away since the events described in the first chapter of these memoirs. He who played so important a part on the day there mentioned was now to be called upon again to acquit himself like a man. John Wyclif—his enemies called him “Weakbelieve”—had not ceased publicly to teach what he believed

to be the truth. As Rector of Lutterworth and Professor of Divinity at Oxford, he had enjoyed great facilities for spreading the doctrines he held, and largely had he availed himself of them. At the University he had succeeded in winning many to his side, and the articles of his faith, especially those which told against the personal corruption and vices of the clergy, found a loud echo

in the hearts of the people. By preaching, writing, and by organising the "poor preachers," who published through the country what he taught them, he had stirred the minds of men to a very great depth, so that they began to inquire the reason for the faith which was in them, and, by the aid of the new light, to see many things, both in Church and State, far otherwise than formerly.

The boldness of his teaching and the open danger which it threatened to the power of the clergy had induced the English prelates to take the means already mentioned for checking him. Those means had proved abortive, and Wyclif, uncondemned, continued to preach and dogmatise to the top of his bent. But a year and more had passed away, and circumstances were a little altered. The Duke of Lancaster was no longer in power, indeed scarcely ever at the court; the doctrines of Wyclif had become somewhat more defined, and therefore more easily assailable, and the time seemed to have come when, if the power of the clergy was to be anything more than a mere name, some steps should be taken to prevent it from being further sapped. Bulls, too, had been received from Rome, under the hand of Pope Gregory XI., directing attention to the heresies which were growing apace. The king got one, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London got three between them, and the University of Oxford got one to itself. They were all written in the authoritative strain, prohibiting the teaching of the heresies, and ordering the caption and imprisonment of John Wyclif himself, to whom his Holiness, besides reciting his full addition, gave also the new degree of Master in Error, and the old one of "Disciple of Antichrist."

In the letter to Oxford the Pope expressed his surprise that the authorities should have been so negligent as to allow the tares* to spring up among the pure wheat of the University, and proceeded to bid them root out all such weeds, and deliver Wyclif and all of his gathering to the safe keeping of the primate and

* Wyclif's disciples were called Lollards, after the use of the word *lolium*, signifying a weed, by the Pope, in his letter to the University of Oxford, in which he speaks of the Wyclifites as "the tares among the good wheat."

the Bishop of London. To these prelates orders were given to proceed immediately against the "infuser of detestable poison," and the king was enjoined, with all the urgency of apostolical authority, to help forward the good work against the arch-heretic who had been so hardy as to put forth "certain false and erroneous propositions and conclusions, not only savouring of bad faith, but tending to overthrow the whole fabric of the Church."

If hard names or injurious words could have hurt Wyclif, the papal bulls might have done the work unaided: they were full of them. But, fortunately for the object of them, hard words, though uttered by a Pope, could not break any bones, and material action had to be resorted to. The University where Wyclif had long taught was so much infected with the new doctrine that many of the governing body avowedly held it, so that the question was mooted and seriously discussed by the proctors or rectors whether the Pope's bull should be received or not. Master Wyclif of his own act relieved the University of the burden which the Pope's orders sought to cast upon it. Obedient to the citation which the primate caused to be served upon him, he came up to London towards the end of April, once more to encounter the charges of his superiors in the Church, and to answer before the synod at Lambeth searching questions concerning his lapsed faith.

He had not, as before, the countenance of great John of Gaunt, or—and it was as well he had not—any such injudicious friend as Lord Henry Percy to insult Bishop Courtney on his behalf; but, if these were wanting, he had fast friends in the mass of the Londoners themselves, over whose minds he had gained an immense influence. Even from them, as from his noble supporters, he had need, as I shall show, to desire to be saved.

Master Wyclif, as my master's old friend, was lodged at our house, and with him it was my privilege, on the day fixed for the hearing before the synod, to go to Lambeth, with many of the principal citizens, among whom Master Philpot was chief. Oswald was still too ill to go, but Will Allein, entirely recovered of the hurts got in Smithfield, bore me company.

An imposing procession it was which made its way to Lambeth

this April morning. Master Wyclif, mounted on a quiet palfrey, and dressed in a like costume to that which he wore at St. Paul's a year ago, looked more aged and careworn than he had then done. Master Philpot, in his rich but simple garb, pranced along beside him, in company with Walworth, Twiford, and many more. A servant with a led horse, bearing a number of books and parchments, rode behind, and in the rear and on either side were great numbers of the Londoners, who came forth on foot to give countenance to the man they loved, and to save him harmless if the malice of his enemies should attempt to do him hurt. For ugly rumours had got about that the Council meant to back up the authority of the clergy and to enforce by the civil power the ecclesiastical sentence, which all felt could not but be strongly against the accused. An idea was prevalent in the minds of the ruling body that free thought in religion was only the prelude to free thought and perhaps free action in politics. Perhaps they were not far wrong; and, thinking to be wise in their generation, they resolved to do all they could towards the suppression of the one lest the other should spring out of it. We shall see whether they were right in thinking so, and how far they succeeded in carrying out their policy. For the present, the Londoners resolved to forbid the exercise of violence upon Wyclif, even if to do so should cause the exercise of some violence upon his aggressors, and with this intention they attended him as far as Lambeth.

As we neared the archbishop's palace, in the chapel of which the inquiry was to take place, we observed several horsemen richly dressed riding slowly forward in the same direction, one wearing the body armour of a knight, and all bearing a badge we thought we had seen before. The badge on their arm was the grey falcon, the badge of the Duke of Lancaster; and as we approached nearer there was no difficulty in recognising the horseman in the knight's armour as Sir Walter Hood.

"What could have brought him here?" thought I to myself as I pointed him out to Will Allein, who was riding beside me; but before we could exchange thoughts upon the subject, Sir Walter halted his party, and, waiting for us to come up, presently ad-

dressed himself to Master Wyclif, bowing courteously the while to Master Philpot and the rest.

"My lord of Lancaster," said he, "has sent me hither to give you greeting on his behalf. He regrets that it is not in his power more thoroughly to help you, but bids me tell you be of good comfort, for as far as in him lies he will see you are not harmed."

"Pray give him my poor thanks, Sir Knight, and say that John Wyclif trusts not in an arm of flesh—that he has a work to do which needs a higher support, and doubts not for a moment that support will be given to him; and say that you met him going to the conflict armed not with carnal weapons, but sheathed in the armour of God, content to do battle or to die in defence of God's holy truth."

"I will so deliver, reverend sir," answered the knight; "but in so far as a poor arm of flesh can serve you, I pray you freely make use of mine. At least give me leave to bear you company to-day; it is my wish, and I am so commanded."

"A poor priest's thanks are all I can recompense you with," replied Wyclif; "but though I trust in God I shall not need your help, I should be churlish did I refuse the kindness you show me. Here are my weapons," added he, pointing to the great Bible, which was fastened to the led horse behind.

And as Sir Walter looked round to see this entirely new sort of armoury, he caught a sight of Will Allein's face looking steadily at his.

Their eyes met, and for a moment I was doubtful what sort of intelligence had flashed between them; for if Sir Walter had no cause of quarrel with Will Allein, it was just possible Will Allein might have cause of quarrel with Sir Walter. It was soon apparent both that Sir Walter had no intention to seek a dispute, and that I had wronged Allein by supposing that he bore malice. What he had said when ill, after the fall from his horse in Smithfield, about Sir Walter's duty, he had not retracted when in health; and presently when, after conversing a short time longer with Master Wyclif, Sir Walter Hood reined back to a place behind him, Will Allein began to talk so freely to his supposed enemy,

that there was evidently an intention to let the past offence be past. Not so the past events, however; for the first thing Will said, after the customary civilities had been exchanged, was—

“Thank you, Sir Walter, for the lesson you gave me in Smithfield the day we last met. I have long longed to tell you how sorry I was for the danger in which I placed you.”

“Not so, young sir,” answered the knight; “you did your duty—I tried to do mine. The brutality of the mob, curse them! was no business of yours, and you could not answer for it. Beshrew me, but they nearly made me hop headless! I was not closer to death when the French knight and I rolled over the ground at Cressy, our daggers restlessly groping after each other’s throat, and every turn we rolled seeming the last one of us should make. I did not fear death, you know, but to meet it on the presentment of a filthy rabble, after twenty years of noble companionship with it, revolted me, I confess. My little ones pray for Sir Nicholas Brembre twice a day since he saved the life which was necessary to them.”

“We were both wrong, I think,” replied Will, “I to charge you as I did, you to take such means to stop me. But my fault was the occasion of yours, so that I must blame myself for the whole affair.”

“No, no,” rejoined Sir Walter; “I was angry and did a foolish thing. You were quite right—quite right. But tell me, how are your hurts? for, if I mistake not, before those villains took me off, I saw you lying, as I thought, dead.”

“Well, I was broken a little,” answered Will; “but if the horse had not been killed, I should not have grieved for myself. The horse was innocent, and suffered most.

“Ay,” said Sir Walter, “I am sorry, too, that the poor thing should have been slain. I consider I owe you a remount for that, and ever meant, should I see you again, to beg your acceptance of one. You shall take a fine filly foaled by this mare, one every way worthy of her mother. No words now,” added he, as Will Allein was about to interrupt with a refusal; “the filly is yours and you must have her, so give me your hand on the bargain and

as a proof of forgiveness. There!" And pulling off the gauntlet from his right hand, he shook Will Allein's hand with manly frankness, so that to see them riding along side by side you could not have supposed they had ever been at variance.

By this time we had reached the king's palace gardens, and skirting along the edge of them between the inclosure and the river, came to the gateway of the primate's residence.

A large number of servants in the archbishop's livery stood within and about the gate. They seemed disposed to demur to the entry of so numerous a company, and begged Master Philpot to bid the majority stay without. But the people surged into the courtyard, and gained their entry into the chapel.

There were already assembled the men to whom Pope Gregory had deputed the task of weeding out the tares from the wheat — Simon de Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, William Courtney, Bishop of London, the Bishop of Winchester, the papal envoy, doctors of laws, assessors and delegates, with William Wideford, the formal accuser.

As Wyclif and his friends entered the chapel, the hum of many voices suddenly ceased. All eyes were turned to the preacher of the new faith, and curiosity was not unmingled with admiration when the multitude gazed on the venerable man who was about to take his trial. He walked with a firm, dignified step up the nave to the raised place outside the chancel screen where the prelates sat. He made a low obeisance to them, and said in a clear, calm tone, that he appeared there in obedience to the fatherly mandate which had bidden him come openly to answer the charges brought against him.

The chapel was not large, and the available space had been further encroached upon by stout barriers placed across the spot where the council sat, the part outside being intended for the accommodation of such of the clergy not in the commission as chose to attend. It was occupied, however, by far different tenants; for here the great mass of those who had come without invitations fixed themselves, and remained, deaf to the orders or entreaties of the porters whose duty it was to guard the spot.

Silence reigned over the multitude so that you might have heard a man draw breath, as Wideford, the monk whose duty it was to accuse, rose to do his office. From a paper which he held in his hand he read in a loud tone the nineteen propositions which had been drawn from Wyclif's writings, and which were considered worthy of synodical condemnation. As soon as he had finished, the archbishop bade him re-read the first extract, and then called upon the accused to recant or explain it. Then came the struggle.

Wyclif endeavoured, in an earnest though perhaps somewhat illogical way, to sustain the doctrine which he had confessedly advanced; arguments, backed up by references to the sacred writings and to the works of the Christian fathers, flowed thick and fast from his mouth, met though they were by little else than pure, unmixed invective from the lips of the monk Wideford. The prelates, whether from lack of zeal, as some assert, or because they were tented to the quick by what they heard, refrained from taking part in the discussion except now and then to check an over-hasty expression or to confine the disputants within the limits of the charges specified. Some said that they were frightened by the message which Sir Lewis Clifford that morning brought them from the princess dowager, forbidding them to pronounce synodical sentence or to proceed judicially in any way against Wyclif as they valued their safety and her goodwill. Others suggested that the judges were themselves Wyclifites, and would not prosecute the founder of their own sect. Whichever were right, it is certain Simon de Sudbury and his colleagues neither said nor did anything which could at all give rise to the thought that persecution was intended; but in proportion as they kept quiet did William Wideford lift up his querulous voice, and in such harsh, angry tones exclaim against Wyclif, that the bystanders concluded some harm was meant towards him; and when over the sixth article, in which Wyclif contended that a temporal prince who knows of the delinquency of a Church is bound, under pain of damnation, to seize her temporal goods, a vehement war of words arose, and Wideford lost all decency in his desire to accumulate reproachful names upon his enemy, the people began to murmur, and ere long to

break forth into indignant cries. I do not say they should have done as they did, but not more than the monk, if so much, did they forget the sacred character of the building in which they were.

When it was too late, the archbishop rose to reduce the people to order: they paid no heed to his admonitions, but broke down the barriers which shut them off from the place of judgment, and crowding with clumsy kindness round Master Wyclif, declared their will to be that the examination should not proceed. Vain were Wyclif's entreaties or the threats of Philpot and other magistrates. The Londoners had got it into their heads that harm would come unless they took the preacher under their own protection, so they clustered around him, to his great personal discomfort and some danger, vociferating and threatening the bishops, on whose behalf Wyclif begged the people to be quiet. Nothing would, however, content them but the ending of the session; to secure which object, they leaped upon the benches, flung the chapel fittings about, and sung vulgar ballads at the top of their voice, acting as the worst enemies of Wyclif could wish that they might say his friends and supporters acted. It was a mistaken kindness. All efforts failing to restore order, the archbishop and his friends indignantly withdrew, the court was broken up, and Wyclif, regretting that he had not been able to fight God's battle in his own way, retired also.

Wyclif returned to his rectory at Lutterworth a few days after this, and for a while was left in peace. But his energetic character and his strong belief that he was bound by his duty to God to preach the new doctrines, once or twice after this got him into trouble. It is, however, not in the province of these memoirs to trace his history, which, an eminently interesting one, is to be collected out of the chronicles of the times. Once again I shall have occasion to mention him, but not now.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SIR HUGH CALVERLEY IS MADE ADMIRAL OF THE SEAS — WE
GET ORDERS TO SAIL, AND I ONLY HALF LIKE IT.

“ I part with thee
As wretches that are doubtful of hereafter
Part with their lives—unwilling, loath, and fearful.”

ROWE.



THE time had now come when something must needs be done to rid the seas of pirates and guard the coasts from insult.

The Duke of Lancaster had asked and obtained that the last grant made by the Parliament for this purpose should be handed over to him in consideration of his undertaking to guard the seas. He took the money, and spent it in fitting out an expedition against the King of Spain, whose crown he claimed for himself in right of his wife Constance. How little he had discharged the trust confided to him was shown by many sad events—the free ranging of John Mercer, the cruel destruction of the Falcon, the defeat and capture of Sir Hugh Courteney, the duke's own defeat at St. Malo, and the subsequent destruction of Fowey and other fine towns by the French. It is true that a few advantages remained to be set off by the English against their many disasters—Sir Thomas Percy had beaten some Spanish ships near Brest, and Sir Robert Knollys had done as much as it was possible to do with the small force at his disposal; and on land the few commanders in whom the people trusted had also done good service.

Sir Hugh Calverley, the Governor of Calais, brave to a fault, and one who loved his country before himself, had spoiled the harbour and ships of Boulogne, and recovered the castle of

Merke, near Calais, from the hands of the French. His fame dated from the former reign, and he was known and respected alike by friends and foes for a skilful soldier and a generous enemy. On him the eyes of the people were now fixed, and the popular voice clamoured for his appointment to the honourable post of admiral of the seas. The people demanded him, and the Council had the wisdom to listen to them. Sir Hugh Calverley was made lord admiral, with his trusty friend, Sir Thomas Percy, as his second in command. Sir Hugh was immediately recalled from Calais, whither he had returned after our meeting in the Tower of London, and preparations were at once made for getting a thoroughly efficient fleet ready for sea. Master Philpot, with his wonted generosity, placed all his available ships at the disposal of the crown; the merchants of London vied with one another in furnishing stores, arms, men, everything that was requisite for the equipment of the fleet. The port of London was alive with the hurry of preparation, while the Cinque Ports and many other towns upon the coast got ready their quota to add to the general armament. Many were the rods now in pickle to tickle the hides of French and Spaniard, and whomsoever else might wish to offer insult to the English flag.

Sir Hugh Calverley was true to the promise he made me in the Tower, and as soon as Master Philpot came to offer him his ships, Sir Hugh accepted, subject, as he said, to the condition that he was allowed to have me also. So, permission being readily granted, and generous means given me to help forward my fitting out, I gave my attention to furbishing up the *Welfare*, for that was the ship I selected.

Poor Oswald! how terribly sad he was to find the doctors and his friends banded together, as he said, to prevent his going on the expedition. His wounds, though going on favourably, were yet far from healed; and even supposing they would have been no hindrance, his impaired strength would have failed to help him through the commonest duties. Courage and spirit he had in overabundance, and it was a bitter thing for him to find they must be curbed to circumstances; but so it was. I scarcely could find

it in my heart to talk over the affair with him, it seemed so like placing him in the position of Tantalus amongst the fruits and water, to speak of attractive things in which he could not share ; but Oswald had a soul above envy, and only inquired particularly into all the details that he might give me the more joy in going ; and that he might, as he said, being acquainted with our power, be able to fight the enemy in his bed-room, without taking the trouble to go to sea after them.

Will Allein took the place which Oswald had before occupied, and showed himself a true son of his family by the way that he acquitted himself. Poor D'Arcy, I missed him, with his experienced eye and ready hand, which would never meet Spauiard any more ; and his post being but poorly supplied, most of the duty which he had undertaken devolved upon me. By dint of unremitting attention, Will Allein and I completed our ship as soon as the best of them, and before the admiral was ready we were able to report ourselves fit for sea.

Sir Walter Hood commanded the contingent furnished by the Duke of Lancaster, whose eight large carracks, two of them carrying cannon, lay trim and neat as models of excellence.

Two weeks were consumed in fitting out the fleet, which numbered upwards of a hundred vessels of all sizes from the port of London alone. Ships furnished by other towns had orders to join us at Southampton, whence we were to sail Sir Hugh Calverley only knew whither.

It was not without some feeling of unusual regret that I left home this time. Parting from those we love and honour is at all times a mournful thing, pregnant with the chances that may happen, heavy with the possibilities of fate ; and on an occasion like the present, the nature of our errand increased these considerations manifold. It was not that any element of fear harboured in my breast — certainly I was free from that, and, knowing it, I could afford without sense of shame to let the natural feelings have their play.

From Master Philpot I had parted before, and had learned something of the way to bid *him* farewell. The same might be

said of all other friends but one, and I did not experience any new form of grief on this occasion, though perhaps my old feelings were a little deepened by age. But as regarded one there was a new feeling, and therefore a new form of grief. That which I scarcely recognised as possible I now knew to be real, and the pain I felt at leaving Alice was the pain of a youth who quits the maiden he honestly and sincerely loves. There was no doubt about it. 'T was idle to conceal it from myself, though there was no occasion to blurt the fact out to others. The pain I felt was no way related to fear—nothing could have turned me from going forward with the fleet—it was the child of hope that troubled me, hope that I might return more worthy of the maiden's love. The pain came out of the knowledge that the delightful hope new born within me might never arrive at a less ideal stage.

However, as the closest friends must part many times before they start on the inevitable journey which they cannot go together, and from which they will never come back, so I succeeded in bidding farewell to those I prized so much, and in the active duties of my calling soon distracted my attention enough to blunt the sorrow I felt.

After two weeks of preparation, as I have already said, the London fleet was fitted and ready for sea. Sir Thomas Percy, with the second division, met us at Southampton, where the assembled ships swelled the total of our fleet to no less than three hundred sail. Sir John Arundel had refused the command of the western division because he would not sail under a chief admiral, even though twenty times more capable than himself, as Sir Hugh Calverley undoubtedly was. He stayed at home for the present, declining to take any part in the defences which he as earl marshal should have been glad to urge forward. He did get a command some few weeks afterwards, in which Oswald Barnes served under him. How he fared and what befell him I purpose to tell as Oswald told to me. But now, having to speak of pleasanter things, it will do if we leave Sir John Arundel to his place. On the 3rd of June, 1379, our fleet of three hundred well-found ships sailed from Southampton harbour for the coast of Brittany.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HOW WE BEAT THE SPANISH SHIPS OFF THE COAST OF BRIT-TANY, AND HOW THE COG GREENWICH TOOK THE GROUND IN ST. MALO HARBOUR—SIR HUGH CALVERLEY.

"There Marinell great deeds of arms did shew,
And through the thickest like a lyon flew,
Rashing off helmes, and rying plates asonder,
That every one his damage did eschew."

Faerie Queene.



HE Welfare was in Sir Hugh Calverley's own division, which led the way, and lay between the land and Sir Thomas Percy's ships.

We had passed Salcombe and Plymouth, the Bolt Tail and Head, and were just abreast of the town of Falmouth, when signals were seen flying from some of the outermost ships in the seaward squadron, which we in the landward division could not make out. It seemed, however, that Sir Thomas Percy could descry them, for presently answering them, he ran up signals on his own account, the result of which was that five of his largest ships detached themselves from the rest, and started off in pursuit of something in the offing. This something turned out to be worth fetching. Two hours sufficed to let the English ships get up with the chase, and two more enabled them to rejoin the main squadron, which, in obedience to the admiral's directions, altered its course and stood towards the detached vessels. The object in coming so far down the south-west coast was to clear the sea thoroughly, at all events on the English side, so that although the coast of Brittany was intended for our cruising station, we sailed as far as Falmouth before we turned off for it.

The prize which Sir Walter Hood made—for he it was who had

seen and started after the bait — consisted of no less than seven deeply-laden merchantmen, carrying wine, silk, and spices from Lisbon to Havre. They were French ships of the latter port, sailing under the protection of a large armed cog, furnished with the newest improvements in shipman's craft, and intended for the fleet of the French king himself. The cog was fitted with a second mast near the stern, and was able, therefore, to bear a greater quantity of sail than any ship with but one mast, a quality now thought most serviceable, but at that time doubted of. The cog was kept as a valuable addition to the fleet, and the other ships with their merchandise were sent to Bristol, to be sold for the benefit of the king and the captors.

Nothing being seen of foes at sea, we set sail for Brittany, where we arrived at daybreak on the following day; and here an incident occurred which showed in a marked degree the chivalrous courtesy of Sir Geoffrey Cormel, a knight resident in those parts.

The crews of several ships had been sent on shore to buy fresh provisions for the use of their comrades, and having got what they wanted, and something over, perhaps, began to stray about the country, pillaging, insulting, and offering violence to the inhabitants. There were as many as four hundred of these creatures going about, armed and bent on mischief, to the great danger of the country's peace, so that Sir Geoffrey Cormel, more for quietness' sake than with the intention of resisting an actual invasion, collected a few men-at-arms, with a hundred archers, and, falling upon the Englishmen, defeated and took them prisoners. He gave strict orders, however, to his men that they should not hurt any one of the captives, but keep them safely till further notice. Then he put off from the shore under protection of a flag of truce, and came alongside Sir Hugh Calverley's ship, which lay so close to the Welfare that we could hear what was said on board; and then, after Sir Geoffrey had mounted the ship's side and made his obeisance to the admiral, he said that he was ready to surrender to Sir Hugh the prisoners which he had under his hand, and that he and other gentlemen of the district would be greatly pleased if the English knights would stay ashore and use the place as

their own. He further offered to give up certain towns and castles, and placed a thousand horses at the disposal of the strangers if they were pleased to land. But Sir Hugh Calverley courteously excused himself, and forcing on the Breton knight a handsome dagger in return for the kindness he had shown the English, accepted the unransomed prisoners from him, and saying that but for work elsewhere which must be done, he should gladly have tasted his hospitality, handed him again into his boat, and bade him adieu.

Shortly after this Sir Hugh divided the fleet into three. One division he sent under Sir Walter Hood—as skilful at sea as he was valiant on shore—to cruise off the English coast from Land’s End to Southampton; a second he despatched northwards to watch the Flemish ports; and the third, comprising a hundred ships, under Sir Thomas Percy and himself, he intended should act between the northern point of the bay in which Cherbourg lies and the city of Bourdeaux. I was in the last-named division, and thus it happened that I witnessed the most memorable act of our all-praised admiral, which I purpose now to relate.

The town of St. Malo had long been troubled by the presence of Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, the Constable of France, who held the castle and much of the surrounding country in the interest of the king, his master. The Duke of Brittany, who had been absent in England owing to the ill-will which many of his subjects bore to him, had lately been recalled into his duchy, and was very anxious that this part of it should be cleared of the French who oppressed it.

Our squadron hove to off the mouth of the harbour of St. Malo, and Sir Hugh proposed, before trying conclusions with the defenders of it, to summon them to yield the place to a force which must needs prove an overmatch for them.

A boat was lowered from Sir Hugh’s ship, into which the admiral entered, and was pulled by six lusty rowers straight for the entrance of the port, while the ships of the squadron remained stationary some distance outside.

When within a few hundred yards of the forts which guard the

entrance, Sir Hugh Calverley unfurled a small white flag which he had taken in the boat, and standing up with it, made signs to those on shore that he came on a peaceful errand.

The rattle of the bow-strings which had been heard while the boat was approaching was hushed, and the sentries stood with bended bows, according to the custom of war, waiting the issue of the negotiations which were about to be opened. In answer to the challenge given by the officer of the guard, Sir Hugh Calverley shouted out his name and his office in the fleet which lay before the town.

“What is your business, and with whom?” asked the officer.

“I will detail it to the commandant,” replied Sir Hugh, “provided you give me safe conduct to him.”

“His leave shall be asked,” was the answer.

And forthwith a soldier was despatched to the round tower, from which floated the knightly banner of Sir Bertrand du Guesclin.

While he was gone upon this errand the rowers lay on their oars, the boat drifting slowly with the flowing tide towards the side of the fort, so that conversation, which at the former distance had been inconvenient, was rendered easy. Though the soldiers still stood to their arms, it was for form’s sake rather than through fear of treachery; and their captain, a courteous gentleman of Lower Brittany, entertained Sir Hugh with the news of the town, and also complimented him highly upon the appearance of his ships.

In about a quarter of an hour the messenger returned with an intimation that it would give the constable “the most sincere pleasure to meet so renowned a warrior as Sir Hugh Calverley;” and that he might enjoy that pleasure, he sent an order to the captain of the fort to receive Sir Hugh honourably, and to conduct him to the constable’s lodgings immediately.

“Deign to enter our poor defences, noble sir,” said the officer, running down the stone stairs which led from the water-side to the *terre pleine* of the fort.

And at the invitation thus courteously given, Sir Hugh bade

his men lay to their oars, a few strokes from which shot the light shallop to the foot of the stairs.

With hat raised, and uttering many civil things, the Frenchman assisted Sir Hugh Calverley to land, and led him up the steps, slippery with spray, into the interior of the fort. Followed by two of his boat's crew, Sir Hugh accompanied the officer to the lodgings of Sir Bertrand du Guesclin; and to see the friendly way in which the two behaved, it could not have been thought that their respective nations were at war, or that in the course of a few short hours duty might compel them to be busily compassing each other's death.

A glance around, as he walked along, served to show Sir Hugh that the town was easily defensible, and that though his own force might be, as it was, far greater than that at Sir Bertrand's disposal, yet the nature of the place was so difficult and hard, that numbers could not avail if a determined defence were made.

A short walk brought the pair to the constable's lodging, into which Sir Hugh was immediately ushered, the French knight remaining without after announcing the arrival of the stranger.

Sir Bertrand du Guesclin was pondering a rough plan of St. Malo and its defences when Sir Hugh Calverley entered the room. He was not yet fully dressed—a circumstance for which he apologised—having on but the leather suit which he usually wore under his armour, while the light armour, which except in actual war he commonly carried, was lying about the room. He was somewhat shorter than Sir Hugh, but of that breadth and muscularity which rendered him so invincible a tilter, whether in sport or war, and made his blows, when they were vigorously laid on, so very hard to bear. His odd-looking big head and decidedly plain features were happily relieved by an amiability of expression when he chose to be courteous that almost made amends for nature's disfavour to him.

He rose and bowed when Sir Hugh entered the room, and, begging him to be seated, inquired in the best English he could command the cause which had made him so fortunate as to be visited by so illustrious a man.

Sir Hugh Calverley was a blunt Englishman, and knowing that he had come upon an errand which it was certain the other could not like, could not understand the meaning of all this politeness, since the Frenchman must be aware of the hostile character of his mission. He therefore declined the honour of a seat, and proceeded at once to business.

"You are perhaps aware, Sir Bertrand, that an English fleet is hove to outside of your harbour here."

The constable signified his knowledge of the fact, and waited for further information.

"I am admiral in command of it, and am ordered by my instructions to pay this place a visit," continued Sir Hugh.

The constable bowed and still waited, the amiable expression which his face had worn giving way, however, to another and very different one, made up of expectation and warrior's contempt of threats.

Sir Hugh went on: "The Duke of Brittany is the friend and ally of my master, the noble King Richard of England, and has invoked his aid against the tyranny of the French monarch, who, forgetful of the duty which subjects owe to their sovereigns, has wickedly helped the malcontents amongst his Highness's people, and driven him from his dominions. The well-disposed among the Bretons have, however, so far prevailed as to enable their duke to come back to his capital and, indeed, to the greater part of his dominions, but here, by your master's aid, he is shut out. My strength in yonder fleet is full three times that which you have at disposal, Sir Constable; and as my orders are to possess myself of the town at any cost, on behalf of the Duke of Brittany, and I am desirous of sparing unnecessary shedding of blood, I have come hither in person to know whether you will give the place up to me or whether you will oblige me to use force?"

Sir Bertrand du Guesclin listened with courteous attention to every word his visitor uttered, and when Sir Hugh had finished his speech, merely said,

"I regret exceedingly, noble sir, you should have been at the trouble to come thus far on such an errand. My instructions are

to hold this place till such time as my master, the King of France, shall order me to quit it. I have not any authority to yield it to you, Sir Hugh Calverley, and until I have, forgive me if I decline altogether to accede to your request."

"You will compel me, then, to use force?" asked the other.

"You will do what seems fit to you," answered Sir Bertrand; "but if you propose to bring your vessels into the harbour, I am afraid you will not find the accommodation very good. Nature has not been kind to the place in the matter of anchorage, and I shall have to side with her in making your entrance difficult if you persist in trying to effect a passage."

There was nothing to be done by means of negotiation, so Sir Hugh felt. He therefore hastened to take leave of the French constable, which he did with many expressions of regret, and of hope that they might soon meet again.

Most thorough was the cordiality and courtesy between the two: they shook hands like honest men as they were, and parted, Sir Hugh accompanied by the French officer, going again to the fort at the harbour's mouth and down the slippery steps to his boat.

Gratified with his reception, Sir Hugh Calverley was rowed on board his own ship, when signals were made to the rest of the squadron, warning them that he meant to try and carry St. Malo from the sea side of it, and that the ships were to stand in at once for the port.

The passage was narrow and very difficult, the local pilots were scarcely to be trusted, and there were but few men in the fleet capable of acting as lodesmen in so important a case. These difficulties, however, did not daunt Sir Hugh. Having picked up a Breton fisherman belonging to St. Malo, who was hovering about in the hope of selling his fish, the admiral questioned him as to his knowledge of the inward passage, and being satisfied that the man knew it, as well as that he was unwilling to use his knowledge on behalf of the English, Sir Hugh addressed him as follows:

"My friend," said he, "distinctly understand that I intend to

bring my fleet inside of yonder harbour. You know the way in, I do not. My purpose is to use your knowledge for the benefit of King Richard and your lawful duke. If you steer my ship through the shoals in safety, this purse of thirty nobles shall be yours; but also remember that if you fail, the instant I hear the keel grating on a bank, that instant shall you be thrown into the sea!"

The fisherman, somewhat startled at the alternative proposed to him, lost little time in making up his mind. The price of his enmity to the Duke of Brittany he had never set so high as thirty nobles, and as it was certain that adherence to the King of France would never bring him so much as a cracked penny, it did not require the spur fastened to the admiral's second assurance to make the Breton resolve to serve his new master.

Orders were immediately given to the other ships to follow closely in the admiral's wake; the pilot took the rudder, and the Royal Richard moved forward with a fair breeze for the mouth of St. Malo's haven. There was no small anxiety in the minds of many of us—I know not what the pilot felt—as the lead line, flung from time to time, showed a steadily decreasing depth. We knew the place abounded in shoals and sandbanks, and watched with carefulness the countenance of the Breton, who, accustomed to the place, had as little real difficulty in going on as if he had been out in the open sea. Now one point of the port was passed, the water deepened again, and still we were not out of our dangers. Warily and deliberately the Breton guided the ship, now asking for an alteration in the position of the sails, now calling to the lead-heaver to declare the soundings, till, the last shoal passed, the open anchorage was reached, and the Royal Richard floated safely in the port of St. Malo.

The Welfare was the next ship following, and in her wake came some five-and-twenty of the smaller war-vessels of the squadron. Two more had grounded on some awkward bank, and remained to tempt the skill and bravery of the French, who swarmed about St. Michael's Mount and the fortress, expecting what might come. From the castle keep floated the golden lilies of France, and on

one of the smaller towers was displayed the flag of Du Guesclin himself. Our own ships were decked out with all the pennons we could muster, and on Sir Hugh Calverley's ship the banner of England, hoisted at the masthead, gave proud defiance to the rival colours which had so often met in bloodiest struggles.

The greater part of the fleet had got in, sufficient to hold its own against any attack the French might make upon it, when that happened which quite changed the character of the day's work, and nearly gave us a thorough disaster instead of a glorious victory.

The storeships, with provisions and munitions of war, being deeply laden, had fallen into the rear of the line, and no harm from seaward being apprehended, no care was taken to guard them specially from attack. There were about ten of the smaller-sized war-ships yet outside, and the storeships numbered twenty in all. A short distance out to sea, on the side of Jersey, a small number of vessels was seen beating up for St. Malo, with English colours flying, and having the appearance of some portion of the fleet which had put into St. Heliers a few days before for the purpose of refitting and repairing some sea damage. No notice was taken of the advancing ships until they were within two hundred yards of the hindermost English storeship, and then a shout was heard from the leading vessel bidding the English lower their sails and surrender to the mercy of Don Luis d'Almanza. All doubt as to the character of the new-comers was quickly removed by the substitution of the Spanish for the English flag at their mastheads, and by the discharge of a large iron "war-crack"—which is often called a gun—at the retiring vessels. The Spaniards numbered fifteen large cogs, filled with men-at-arms and archers, and carrying besides several of these guns, which, though they are not really so destructive as arrows or bolts, greatly terrify the ignorant mariners by the noise they make, "as if all the devils in hell were roaring through them."

Very few minutes sufficed to make the enemy masters of three of the storeships and two of the armed pinnaces; and had they

been content with this prey, it is most likely they would have got clear away before they could be molested. Either they did not know the strength of the rest of the English fleet, or they calculated on making off with their prizes before the fleet could again get out of the harbour of St. Malo.

Unfortunately for them the keen eye of Sir Hugh Calverley made them out almost as soon as they hailed the ships. What to do he scarcely knew. The dangers of the navigation through which he had passed were such as to make it a dangerous matter to hurry out again, and yet, unless he did so, there was no help for it but to lose the stores for his fleet, and some of the most useful of the war-ships. The pilot swore he could not take the *Royal Richard* out again in the then condition of the tide and with the wind contrary, the knights on board were full of apprehension for the scheme, and Sir Hugh himself felt deeply the gravity of his position. But he hesitated no longer than a minute. His heart burned within him at the notion of seeing his ships and soldiers taken under his very eyes; the French were looking on, and probably jeering at him; the honour of England was at stake, and he resolved on an effort to save it.

“Comrades!” he cried, “shall this be borne, that, caught in a trap, we be made fools of by Spaniards? Foul shame it were to suffer such a thing! We stay here while those grinning dogs spoil our ships and kill our friends! Let it never be said we were unwilling or did not try to give aid. The issue is with God; let us trust in Him and go!”

So saying, Sir Hugh was deaf to the entreaties of the pilot or any other who wished to stay. The *Royal Richard* was put about, and, under the guidance of the Breton helmsman, was rowed forward in places where the wind would not serve, and by sails and oars was once more put through the difficult windings of the intricate way. I was on board Sir Hugh’s ship when she started outwards, and lucky for me that I was, for a large cog, the *Greenwich*, which slipped into my place, took the ground at the first turn, and swinging round with the tide right across the channel, effectually barred the progress of any of the rest. Sir

Hugh had the work all to himself, saving the few yet outside which remained untaken.

On went the Royal Richard, throwing back the foam as she darted through the water on her canvas wings, and rushing straight for the prey she meant to strike. The Spaniards saw her, and prepared for blows. As soon as she came within a hundred yards, Sir Hugh, who stood sheathed in armour, battle-axe in hand, close by the mast, gave the word to the archers; and as he bade them show what stuff their arms and bows were made of, they poured in such a volley, so true and deadly, that over a score Spaniards fell to rise no more. Again and again came the terrible hail, grinding through corslets and morions, wriggling into the hearts and brains of the enemy, and so filling the survivors with astonishment as to render them incapable of sending a single flight in return. And as the arrows flew the ship went on, till she crunched against the sides of the Spanish commander's vessel and laid her fairly on board. No sooner did she touch than Sir Hugh Calverley, followed by myself and some thirty more, sprang on to the enemy's deck, where a scene of carnage ensued quite sickening to think of. Sir Hugh seemed like a giant possessed with a war demon. He hacked, and thrust, and brained the foes before they could utter words to beg his mercy; and ere the life was well out of them, he buried them with his own hands by casting them into the sea. The rest of us were not slow to follow the example of our leader, and in ten minutes from the time we boarded her, the Spanish ship was in our hands without a living Spaniard left in her.

Scarcely had we done before two more of the enemy were upon us, and the work had to be gone through again. The sea itself put an end to the miseries of one of them by sinking her with all on board, whereby we sadly lost a dozen of our best men. Meantime the English mariners in the captured ships, inflamed by the example before them, turned upon their captors and flung them overboard, and then headed for the harbour mouth out of reach of the enemy. The pinnaces and cogs also which had not been seized came to our assistance, for the odds were still enor-

mous, considering that succour could not get out to us from St. Malo. By their aid, and the incomparable valour of Sir Hugh Calverley, the combat had this result, that out of fifteen ships which formed the attacking squadron—all larger than ours, except the Royal Richard—five were captured, one was sunk, and the remainder were so badly mauled that I doubt if three of them ever reached port again. The prizes taken were all recaptured, and that evening closed upon one of the most brilliant victories that had graced the English arms since the days of the Black Prince.

The Duke of Brittany was loud in his praises of Sir Hugh's conduct, and Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, an applauder of brave deeds by whomsoever done, could not refrain from sending a flag of truce to compliment the admiral on his victory.

Do not think that the Breton helmsman went without reward. But for him it was likely the Royal Richard would have done as the Greenwich did, and then defeat and disaster would have been given us for victory. A hundred nobles and a rich gold chain recompensed the man for his skill and obedience, and further secured his services to the English fleet for the future.

The meditated attack upon St. Malo was not made at this time.

At our leisure the fleet withdrew, and being in need of things which could not be had in those parts, sailed for Southampton, arriving there in three days' time.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOW SIR JOHN ARUNDEL SAILED FOR BRITTANY, AND HOW
VENGEANCE OVERTOOK HIM WHEN HE GOT TO SEA.

“My ships unrigged,
My sails all rent in sunder with the wind,
My oars broken, and my tackling lost—
Yea, all my navy split with rocks and shelves.”

The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage.



ON our return to Southampton I learned that my dear master and friend, John Philpot, had been elected Lord Mayor of London, to which office his fellow-citizens had nominated him some months before. This was a position in which he could do his will for the benefit of his country and the capital. How fit he was for the office of chief magistrate subsequent events will show. A long epistle from him reached me on landing, wherein he spoke of his plans for the future, counselled me to stand by the model of solid manliness which I had in Sir Hugh Calverley, and told me news of those I longed to hear about. Alice was well, and in a few days would hear of what had been done at St. Malo. The thought that she would be pleased to know what part I had had in the action made me feel prouder even than when Sir Hugh, after the fight was over, shook hands with me on the blood-stained deck, and publicly thanked me for the assistance I had given him. Oswald, it seems, had mended rapidly since our departure, and thinking we should be longer absent, and growing tired of inaction, sought and obtained leave to go in the fleet which Sir John Arundel commanded, and which was to take succours of men and arms to the Duke of Brittany.

Not waiting for our return to port, Sir John put to sea three

days before our arrival. We had orders to refit as soon as possible, join the new squadron, and proceed with all haste to the coast of Brittany. At our own request, Will Allein and I were transferred to the admiral's ship, where we served as the good knight's ancients—a post which Oswald Barnes filled on board Sir Thomas Bannaster's ship in the other fleet.

After spending four days in repairing the ships, renewing the pavises which had been damaged in the recent encounter, and taking on board a fresh supply of stores, we sailed, with a light breeze, once more from Southampton, through the scarpèd rocks which stick ominously out of the sea near Hurst Castle, and so into the open water. Here, after a day or so of light contrary winds, which pushed us slightly to the westward, a furious storm burst upon us with such awful violence, that the great mercy of God alone prevented us from meeting the death which man's aid was useless to keep at bay. How we fared shall be told in due time, but it is of Sir John Arundel's fleet I wish now to speak. Oswald Barnes, who sailed in it, gave me an account of the disaster which befell it, showing how heavily the wrath of God fell upon the children of disobedience, of whom Sir John Arundel was undoubtedly chief. The account furnished by an eye-witness is of necessity better than that of a mere narrator, and therefore I give in his own words

OSWALD BARNES' STORY.

The fleet consisted of thirty-five ships, well found and manned, carrying two hundred men-at-arms and four hundred archers for the service of the Duke of Brittany. Sir Thomas Bannaster, Sir Nicholas Trumpington, and Sir Thomas le Dale were the principal commanders besides Sir John Arundel; and many noble youths, the flower of English chivalry, sailed in the fleet. But there were among us men with whom to serve was to tempt the anger of the Almighty—cruel and hard men, who feared neither God nor man, delighting in mischief, and very wantons in riot. They behaved as though they had been the swine into whom the unclean spirits entered in the country of the Gadarenes—like

them they were driven down a steep place to perish in the sea, after the measure of their iniquity was full, and the hour had arrived for the punishment of their manifold wickedness.

I sailed with Sir Thomas Bannaster—as noble a gentleman as ever wore sword—and, though God was pleased to involve him in the general destruction, I trust and believe it was for the good of his soul—which may the saints preserve!—rather than because of offences in which he had no share.

We had left port four days, when the wind fell so light that it was considered advisable to seek an anchorage. The shipmen were afraid of our drifting on to unknown places, so the course of the fleet was shaped for St. Maravina, on the coast of Cornwall, where we arrived on the following day. Sir John Arundel immediately landed, and, making his way to a convent not far from the shore, demanded an audience of the lady superior, and of her required that she should find lodging and food for him and his soldiers, who came, as he said, on the king's business.

The abbess, as soon as she saw Sir John, instinctively apprehended the dangerous character of her guest. The lawless look that most of his followers wore, the hungry manner in which they eyed the silver patens which stood upon a sideboard, the brutal leer with which they stared at her and her servants, convinced her that she might as well open her gates to Satan and his crew as to these wretches who stood before her; so, with much respect and some trembling, she addressed herself to Arundel, praying him to remember who they were that sought admission into a religious house, and how he must know they were prone to evil which neither he nor she had power to prevent.

“Tut, tut, woman!” replied Arundel, “my fellows won't harm you. They are very lambkins for gentleness, and as for their morals, why, you will have a capital opportunity of improving them whilst they stay in your fold; so don't be niggardly, but let us have what we want.”

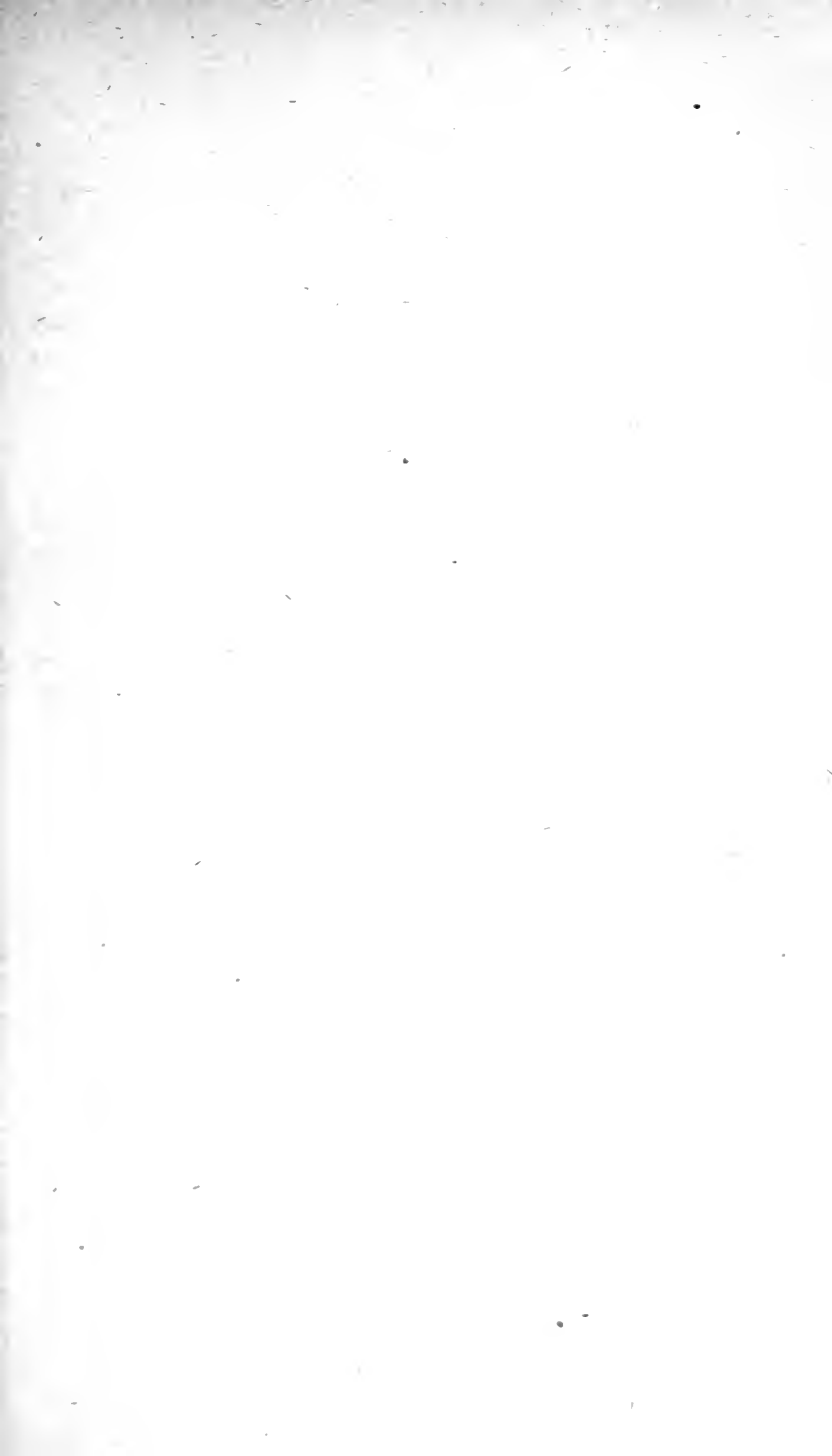
“Oh, sir, I beseech you,” answered the nun, with her hands clasped, kneeling before him, “bethink you of what you do. We are defenceless women, unable to resist your entry here, but

should you force your way hither, and harm should come of it, remember there is a God, whose house you violate, and to whom you must surely answer for the wrong. Go not to war with a curse resting upon you, lest the avenging angel direct the enemy's swords to your hearts, and send you unassoiled to your account. I appeal to your generosity not to enter here. There is lodging for you and yours in the neighbourhood. Oh, sir! seek it, and be guiltless of sacrilege."

"Fool, rise up!" said Arundel with a scowl. "Preach me none of your Lollery. Give orders for the immediate reception of my men, and look to it that they be well provided for. Here I am, and here I will remain, until such time as I choose to quit; so leave your speech-making, for I'll have none of it."

Thus did this ruffian treat as courteous a lady as ever was, speaking to her as though she were dirt, almost spurning her out of her own chamber. Several other captains, whose names let me not drag out of the foul oblivion in which they are sunk, speedily joined Sir John Arundel at the abbey, filling it with as scapegrace varlets as could be picked out of all England, turning the house which heathen men held sacred, into a den of thieves. Sir Thomas Bannaster, and a few more of the same following, having tried in vain to dissuade Sir John from his evil course, remained on board their ships, as all should have done, and refused to let their men go up to the abbey at all.

The poor abbess's suspicions were terribly warranted. Arundel's men quartered themselves in the place, occupying the rooms devoted to the nuns, maltreating the ladies, and behaving in such fashion as ought not even to be mentioned. The girls who were there at school, and the widows who were in refuge at the abbey, were alike undone, and the horrors of war were let loose upon the people of the soldiers' own country. The curses of the neighbourhood were loud and deep; the people called upon God to blight the wicked men with His curse, and implored woe and destruction upon their heads. The prayers were heard and answered, but, before that, opportunity was offered to the evil to repent—a mercy they used only as an occasion for doing more





harm still; for, not content with doing mischief at home, they must needs spread themselves over the country, plundering and pillaging, and destroying all they could not get to their ships. They slew the cattle in the field and burned the corn out of mere wantonness, so that the poor folk prayed their enemies might come upon them, and be kind to them, if this was the treatment they received from friends. Finally they did not spare to commit the sin of sacrilege in the church itself. They broke in and stole the ornaments of the altar, the sacred vessels, and all that was of value; and they dragged numbers of the poor women whom they had outraged at the convent down to their ships, and, having put them on board, prepared to sail away.

"Would to God the admiral had been there!" said I, when Oswald told me the story; "he would have flayed the wretches alive, and thrashed them with their own skins."

"Would he had!" said Oswald; "we could do nothing against such numbers."

Three days after this the wind shifted, and blew favourably for a start. Sir John Arundel gave orders to loose from port and gain the open sea. As he stepped out of the convent door to go down to the beach, a hare came suddenly out of the adjoining cover, and, darting across his path, ran on to the thicket opposite. Sir John noticed it, and was about to make a remark to his companion, when he was aware of the presence of a lame man in a monk's dress, who advanced towards him with a crucifix in his hand, and with a dignity on his face which awed even brutality.

"By the Mass! I'm not lucky this morning," stammered Sir John, who, thoroughly superstitious, as bad men are wont to be, thought more of the hare, and meeting the lame man, than he did of all the censures with which Holy Church could admonish him. "Had I not seen St. Martin's bird fly from left to right but now, I should fear the omen. God save you, father!" he said, addressing the monk, who stood facing him some few yards distant.

"Take not God's holy name within your lips, you enemy of God," replied the monk, "nor insult me with your salutations. I am here to tell you that Heaven is weary of you, and very

shortly will wipe you out. You, Sir John Arundel, you and all your crew shall within the week stand to give answer for your crimes. The outrages you have committed are about to be visited on your head. God casts you out, and Holy Church curses you."

And, so saying, the monk slowly uttered the awful curse denounced against those who persist in sin. The words, scorching even to the ears of good men, blistered the soul of the wicked man who heard them. He turned pale, and for a moment seemed irresolute about throwing himself at the churchman's feet and imploring pardon; but his worse nature prevailed, and the old scowl coming over his dark face, he put his hand to the haft of his sword as though he meant to take instant vengeance on his denouncer, but ere the blade had time to quit the scabbard, the monk had disappeared among the bushes which surrounded the house. The suddenness of his departure, coupled with the strange weird look the man wore, impressed Sir John Arundel with the conviction that he had seen a ghost, that indeed Heaven had sent a messenger specially to curse him and to reproach him with the number and foulness of his sins. Sullen and moody, he walked down to the shore, and tried to divert his attention from what he had seen by busying himself with preparations for starting.

When all was ready, and the men were about to push off, a shrill cry was heard from the high cliff overhead, and looking up, Sir John saw the abbess, with hair dishevelled and hands strained towards the sky, uttering something in a frenzied tone which sounded more like malediction than blessing; and having finished her imprecation against him, she leaped with resolute spring from the rock on which she had been standing, and fell with a crash on to the stony beach. Unable to survive the wrong done to her, and erring, perhaps, in her wits by reason of the shame, she had taken this course of putting an end to her woes, first cursing the cause of them, and then rushing into the presence of God, lest Arundel should get there before his accuser.

The poor creature was picked up and carried away by some of the peasants who were near. Sir John Arundel, nothing cheered

by the incident, shuddered as the woman's death-shriek pierced his ear, and the cry with which she passed away rang like a knell across the sea.

Arrived on board his own ship, Arundel found little to comfort him. Robert de Blakeney, his shipmaster, came to him, and with much earnestness entreated him not to weigh anchor. He was certain, he said, that a great storm was imminent; he had watched the wind and weather forty years, and knew the signs of a tempest as well as he knew the sun at noon. Without doubt trouble was at hand, and he begged his master, as he loved his life, to stay yet a few days.

Whether Sir John had taken horror at the place, or whether his fate drew him on, I know not, but he pushed Robert on one side, and refusing to listen to any "old woman's nonsense," impatiently gave orders to hoist the sails.

The anchors were weighed and got on board, the sails set, the sheets made fast, and away we all went out of the bay with a fair wind, having a tendency to freshen. It was noon on a gloomy day in December that we quitted the anchorage. There were many mariners among us who had passed their lives on the water, and who, like Robert de Blakeney, disliked the look of the sky. Dark, inky clouds were flitting restlessly about, the upper air seemed heavy, the wind moaned and sighed, and the water looked hard and cruel, as if it would not refuse a victim. Before night came on, it was evident we should be in for trouble. The wind increased every minute, and howled fearfully, the sea got up and lashed itself into angry foam, tumbling on to the ships as though it would dash their sides in. A thick bank of black clouds to windward showed us what we might expect, and before two hours had gone we were flying before the wind with stricken sails and nothing to steady us.

"St. Catherine help us!" cried the old helmsman, as a huge wave bounded on to the ship, carrying away a portion of the bulwarks, and washing a number of furnishings overboard.

"Steady, men, steady!" shouted Sir Thomas Bannaster, as, cowed by the violence of the water, some of the mariners showed

signs of faltering. "Take a pull upon those braces to keep the yard steady;" for the yard, though stowed, swayed so with the motion of the ship, that it threatened to do damage to the remainder of the bulwarks.

I flew to the weather brace, and with three or four of the men endeavoured to get a good pull upon it. Whilst we were at our work, the ship gave a tremendous lurch, and a whole flood of water jumped seething on to the deck. Two of my party were struck down, and before assistance could be given, the greedy wave had lapped them up, twisted them in its folds, and washed them overboard. At the same time the mast gave way, snapping close off at the foot. At the risk of our lives, some of us sprang to the fastenings which secured the great spar by its rigging, and cutting through the shrouds and ropes, succeeded in getting the wreck clear of the ship. Eased of her burden, the Romney (so the ship was called) righted, and flew through the water like a soul in chase. Fortunately for us, we yet managed to steer her, keeping her before the wind, which was our only chance of weathering the storm.

The other vessels in the squadron had fared some better, some worse. Two large "escomers," each carrying a knight's flag, were scudding a little to leeward of us, about a ship's length between them. They were dangerously close to each other, and without the means of keeping farther away. Their masts had not gone, and by dint of a small bonnet hoisted in place of the tref, the shipmen managed to keep them somewhat under command. We, without sail, were drifting fast to leeward, expecting for a certainty to be foul of them in the next few minutes, when the chances of collision were abruptly taken away by the sudden disappearance of the objects of our care. These two vessels were commanded by men who were after Sir John Arundel's own heart—bold, bad men, who kept no faith when their own lust or interest stood in the way. They had taken a number of the poor women who had been stolen from the convent, and forced them on board their ships; and now—shame to manhood that I should have to tell it!—they did not scruple, in the face of danger, to fling the poor

creatures overboard, in order to lighten the ships. Some thirty were thrown from these two, making, with others who perished, upwards of fourscore. The waves were more merciful to them, and put them at once to rest, reserving their fury for the men who remained.

The ships were, as I said, very close together, and too near to us. The means they resorted to for easing their keels did not serve them. I saw them both, their sides almost touching, rise to the top of an enormous wave, of which we were on the opposite crest. For a moment the wind seemed to grow dumb, so that we could hear from yonder, above the noise of the waters, the yells which told us that the crash had come. Another moment, and the avenging angel smote them. The timbers severed, the seams opened, the water rushed in. In an instant the ships went down, and two hundred miscreants the less breathed in the world.

All that night we ran before the gale, and when morning broke there were but five ships to be seen. One of them we made out to be Sir John Arundel's.

"The devil cares for his own," observed some one near me; "I doubt Sir John is born to be drowned."

I did not make any answer, my thoughts being occupied, not so much with the chances which Arundel had of drowning, as with the conviction that we, at least, should come by our death in that fashion. We had shipped a large quantity of water, the timbers strained as the Romney laboured heavily in the sea, and I expected, with some reason, that the sand of our lives was nearly run out. Yet another day and night were vouchsafed to us. We could not stir to get any food. Lashed to our places, none of us dared to move.

That day we saw another of our largest ships go down, and ne'er a soul was saved. The next morning we saw land, high cliffs, right ahead of us. The end then was near. Either we should get flung ashore by the rude hands of the waves, and so escape; or be dashed by them on to the hard rocks, and so be broken to pieces. Two hours more, if the ships held together so long, would decide the question; and this is how it was settled.

The broken water along the coast-line clearly marked the presence of a reef, and the seamen who saw it shook their heads, and some were for getting the ship round, if possible, so as to keep the open sea, preferring to die a gentler death than being pounded on the rocks. We could not do this, however, for we had no sail; besides, it seemed better to make an end at once than to prolong a miserable life for a few hours more. So the Romney was kept on her way for the shore, from which the hoarse voice of the breakers came every minute louder and louder.

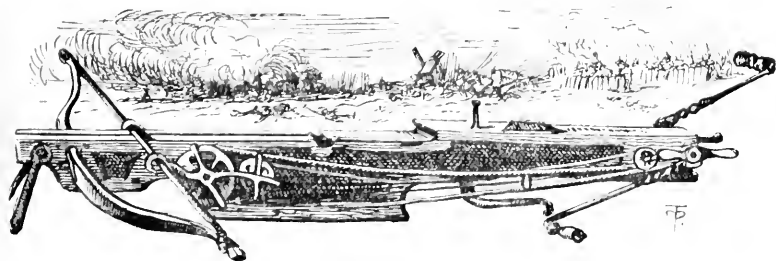
There was a small island not far from land for which Arundel's ship was steered. She was ahead of us, going under a piece of tapestry which had been rigged up as a storm-sail. It seemed a grim kind of pleasantry that it should happen that the subject worked on the cloth was "The resurrection of the just." The sail helped them along, and we saw the ship steered for an opening in the rocks where there appeared to be a chance of safety. Suddenly, before she reached the passage, she struck on an unseen ledge of rock, split in two, and disappeared like so much salt. Robert de Blakeney swam to shore and scrambled up the rock. Thence he spied Sir John Arundel struggling in the water near him, his clothes entangled in a piece of the wreck. Down the faithful fellow jumped to where his master lay, and, holding on by a piece of rock, raught him his hand, with the hope of pulling him out. The drowning man tried to clutch the friendly fingers, but as he was in act to seize them, something (men say a figure like that of the Abbess of St. Maravina) dragged him back into the water, where his soul took flight. Poor Robert, trying to save his master's body, slipped on the slimy stone, fell headlong into the sea, and was drowned.

Of ourselves in the Romney I cannot tell what occurred after we got into the line of breakers. A faint recollection I have of the ship striking, and then I remember nothing but that I found myself lying on some rushes in a peasant's hut, kindly tended by some wild-looking folk whom I learned were Irish.

Sir Thomas Bannaster, Sir Nicholas Trumpington, and Sir Thomas le Dale, Sir John Arundel, and near two thousand men

had perished. The nuns of St. Maravina were avenged. I and ninety more who survived stayed for some weeks amongst the people of the coast. We then made our way to Kinsale, and after a few days got carried into England.

The same storm which overthrew Sir John Arundel's fleet caught us not far from port. The damage done to some of our squadron was also considerable, but, by the mercy of God, we escaped disaster. The French and Spanish fleets, which were at sea, suffered almost as badly as our countrymen, so that on both sides of the sea the shores were strewn with ghastly wrecks and drowned men, while wives and mothers at home, whose hearths had been made desolate, humbled themselves under the mighty hand of Him who guides the whirlwind and directs the storm.



CHAPTER XXIX.

SIR HUGH CALVERLEY'S EXPEDITION IN AID OF THE DUKE OF BRITTANY.

"Perdy, not so," said she; 'for shameful thing
Yt were t' abandon noble chevisaunce,
For shewe of perill, without venturing.'"

SPENSER.



HE expedition which was intended for the succour of the Duke of Brittany having met with the disaster described in the last chapter, further attempts to help him were not renewed. So large a portion of the fleet being gone, and so many brave men being swallowed up, it was not deemed advisable to risk the loss

of any more. Orders came to Southampton for the remainder of the vessels to return home, and accordingly, as soon as we could repair the damage done to our ships by the storm, we put to sea again, and came with all haste into the Thames to London. My kind master, John Philpot, I found burdened with many cares, including those of the chief magistrate, which had been, as I have said, superadded since I left him; and I resolved, in spite of

many flattering offers which were made to me, to remain by him, and give him all the assistance in my power. Sir Hugh Calverley wished me to enter the king's service, and to give myself wholly to the profession of arms, promising me as much help as could be desired in qualifying myself for the highest prizes of that calling. The Lord Latimer, too, of the king's council, made me gracious offers, which I declined; for a sense of duty, gratitude, and—let me not blush to affirm an honest truth—of love, restrained me; and I resolved, while serving, whenever occasion would allow me, in the ranks of the army, to continue in the family of John Philpot.

But while strong personal ties of gratitude and duty bound me to my master, and the stronger tie of a pure, honest love which bound me to his daughter, there was, perhaps, an additional motive which led me to my decision, and that was to be found in the gradual but sure growth of a spirit in the state which tended greatly to mark the differences in the standing of the several classes within it. The spirit soon afterwards, in its wildest form, took possession of the popular mind, and drove the people into excesses truly horrible to think of; but in a more moderate and just shape it influenced the men who, not being lords of the soil, had as great, if not greater, interest in the well governing of the kingdom as the mightiest proprietor in it; and having in the late king's reign, especially towards the end of it, given strong proofs of their vitality, they were daily increasing the power which they wielded. This led, of course, to resistance from the class above. It was evident that the opposite interests were getting more and more defined, and the time seemed at hand when the two might come into direct antagonism. I saw, or rather felt, the truth of this; and being by birth, education, and present circumstances pledged, beyond all doubt, to the side which opposed feudalism and encouraged the liberty of men, I determined not to commit myself to a career or a service which might be a thrall to me when the time came for action with my class.

But the love of adventure and novelty was also strong within me, and if it could be in any way gratified without damage to the

principle just mentioned, I felt myself at liberty to indulge it. An occasion for doing so speedily presented itself. The Duke of Brittany being disappointed of the succours promised to him, and not knowing of the fate of Sir John Arundel and his companions, sent two ambassadors to London to seek an explanation and to hurry the departure of the reliefs. When the ambassadors came, as they did at Whitsuntide in the year 1380, the king explained to them the failure of the first expedition, how it had had to contend with God and not with man; and, in answer to the urgent solicitations which were made for assistance against the French, promised that the Lord Thomas of Woodstock, Earl of Buckingham, and youngest son to the late king, should very shortly cross the sea and march to the help of the overmatched Bretons. The king meant what he said, and before the envoys returned, orders were issued to a large number of noblemen and knights to meet in arms by a certain day, and to be ready to pass, with three thousand men-at-arms and as many archers, into the kingdom of France.

My first knowledge of the intended expedition was through Sir Hugh Calverley, who came to see both my master and myself, to offer me a place in his company, and to confer with the mayor, John Philpot, about a yet more important matter.

"Well, Hubert," said the knight, as he met me in the doorway of the house, "we're off again, and at once, for France. What say you? will you come with us?"

"Is it for a long campaign, Sir Hugh?" I asked.

"Nay, that is beyond my ken," answered he; "some of us, I doubt not, will find it long enough if the French swords manage to find their way between our ribs; but for the rest I believe 't will be no great matter. We are to march through France, and fight our way to Brittany. The sport will be good, I warrant you, and adventures plenty as blackberries."

"There is nothing I should like better, Sir Hugh," I replied, "if it were not that——"

"That what?" broke in the knight. "Friend Philpot can spare you, and it is a shame that blades of your metal should rust

here at home when there is good service toward beyond sea. Tut, tut, no excuse; you shall have a place in my company. I'll make it right with the master. It's a bargain, lad, a bargain; but where's our friend John this morning? I must see him, and speedily too."

I led Sir Hugh Calverley to my master, and left him to settle the business which I will presently mention, whilst I went to consult my own thoughts as to the propriety of joining the expedition. I had not explained to Sir Hugh the reasons I had for wishing to stay at home, nor would he have understood them if I had. A rough soldier with a gentle heart, he had been bred amidst war and lived amongst arms from his cradle. The impulses of kindness which his good heart made him feel were but the unpremeditated actions of his abundant good-nature, and he never considered beforehand how to make his plans unselfish and considerate of others, for the simple reason that he instinctively felt he must always be unselfish and considerate when the time for action came. So the habit of his mind disqualified him for entering into the thoughts which had occupied me. Had the unkindness of my leaving my master been immediately apparent, he was the last man on earth to listen to a suggestion that I should go; but as there was no instant need for my services, he would not have seen any reason why I should stay until there was. The other thoughts, regarding Alice, he would not have understood. He had outlived them in himself, or had never felt them; and as to the political reasons for remaining, they were quite beyond or beneath him. He was cast in the ancient mould, which knew of master and servant as relations ordained by Nature, and having faithfully served and humanely commanded, he failed to understand the talk now getting rife about freedom from the oppression of others.

Whilst I was debating in my own mind these several questions, tempted sorely by the war on the one hand, and drawn by the restraining motives on the other, having almost persuaded myself that Master Philpot had no need of me, and that the rising distinction of class to which I have referred was too remote a cause to

keep me back, she who was the subject of the rest of my thoughts came out of Dame Margaret's room, in which she had been seeing to some household matters, and tripped down the passage.

"What makes you so gloomy-looking this morning?" inquired she; "has anything vexed you?"

"No, Alice," I said, "nothing has vexed me; but I am in doubt about something that has been proposed to me just now."

"Oh! that horrid Sir Hugh Calverley has been here, wanting you to go to the wars again, I suppose," replied Alice, "and you are doubting whether you can quit my father. That's it now — say, am I not right?"

"Yes, indeed you are, little witch," I replied, smiling that she should so well have guessed what was passing in my mind; "but you have not guessed all."

"Why, then, you are fearful that Oswald can't go with you, and that you will have to put up with Will Allein in his stead."

"Not right this time, enchantress," I said, laughing. "If I go, Oswald goes too; and as for Will Allein, he is certain to go with Sir Walter Hood, if the Duke of Lancaster means to send a contingent, as I hear he will."

"Well, then, I cannot imagine why you should hesitate," said she; "it is something beyond me."

"Not altogether," I replied; "indeed, no further than yourself, Alice, for to tell you the honest truth, it was the thought of again leaving you that made me hesitate."

"Leaving me!" cried Alice, in an almost frightened voice; "what can you mean, Hubert?"

"Why, Alice, you must know that ever since the day I came here, since the day when you took me to see Philip Aubert's peacocks, and enlisted me in your service to bring waterpots for your flower-beds, I have felt for you more than a brother's affection. My father loved you — used to call you, as I remember, his little daughter — and his son has ventured to love you likewise, hoping to call you some day his wife. At Battle, Alice, when we went on the expedition to Peter's Haven, in the fight with John Mercer, and in the late storm, the thought of you sustained me when I

might have faltered. I strove to win honour for myself that I might be more worthy of you ; and now that duty seems to call me away, I hesitate, because I cannot bear the thought of again quitting you so soon, perhaps for ever."

"Poor Hubert!" said Alice, as she saw I was really distressed, "I am so sorry to find you unhappy, and about so simple a creature as myself too. It is very kind and good of you to think so much of me, but you must not let me stand in the way of your duty—no, not for a minute."

"Thank you, Alice, for reminding me of that," I cried, folding the maiden in my arms and tenderly embracing her ; "you have shown me the right path, but I feel I cannot follow it. I cannot endure the idea of leaving you."

"You told me just now you loved me, Hubert," said she, gravely ; "were you in earnest?"

"On my honour, yes!" I cried, not catching the drift of her question.

"On your honour, Hubert, which you propose to sully—how can you ask me to believe you on that? I do not want you to assure me of your love, which I have felt, and been, oh ! so thankful for, Hubert ; but if you love me as you say you do, prove it to me by going to this war—that is, if duty demands it," added she ; "do not go if there is no necessity for it—I mean, do not go for the mere brutal love of fighting."

Now this last was very nearly the only motive which I had for wishing to go, and I was beginning to shelter my desire to stay under the condemnation contained in Alice's last words, when the door of Master Philpot's chamber opened, and Sir Hugh Calverley, with my master, appeared in the passage.

"Halloa !" said the soldier, as he came upon us looking rather confused, "what's the meaning of all this? Love-making, eh, Master Philpot, under our very eyes! By the Mass, a comely pair too! Didn't want to leave the master, eh, Master Hubert? Oh, you young hot-bloods are sly as foxes."

"I am ready to attend you, Sir Hugh, whenever my master gives me leave to go," answered I, somewhat nettled at the

manner in which the knight spoke, though his jolly bearing and the unmistakeable good-humour of his remarks made it impossible to be angry.

"You have my permission to go, Hubert, if you have the desire," said Philpot; "I even wish that you should go."

This last sentence jarred somewhat upon my ear, for I fancied I detected in it the hint of a wish that Alice and I should be "better strangers;" and it was not with so much graciousness as might have been that I accepted the generous offers which these two loving friends made to me.

However, I did accept them, and forthwith prepared for a start.

It seems that the pressing business which Sir Hugh Calverley had with my master was of a strictly financial character. So far back as the coronation of King Richard, and from that time to the present, many of the knights and gentlemen of the king's court had been hard pressed for money. The extravagances of dress and show in which the court now indulged had very much increased their indebtedness, and the consequence was that now, when they were called upon to serve in the war against France, many of them could not get their armour and accoutrements which they had pawned to the Lombards in return for money advances by them. Not only their own personal body armour was pledged, but the armour to be worn by their servants was also in pawn, so that it was not possible for them to obey the king's summons. It was in this dilemma that Sir Hugh Calverley came to the lord mayor, not to interest him about his own affairs, for none were straighter than Sir Hugh's own; but to see if something could not be done for the commonweal, as regarded the others, out of the common purse. The answer which Sir Hugh received from John Philpot was a refusal to apply the city funds to any such purpose, but an order upon the several merchants in whose hands the soldiers' armour was, to surrender the same to Sir Hugh Calverley, on the engagement of Philpot himself to be answerable for the amount of reasonable loans upon them. The knights' own armour, he said, they might redeem themselves; but the noble generosity he already evinced cost him not less than

two thousand marks of silver, a nobleness which earned him the favour of all good men, and the public thanks of the king's council.

Oswald Barnes, my old friend and companion, was willingly taken by Sir Hugh Calverley into his train. Will Allein, as I predicted, was entered in Sir Walter Hood's company; and in a few days after the event narrated in this chapter, we set out for Dover on our way to Calais. Carrow, of course, carried me. The long absences I had made on occasions where a horse could not serve had separated Carrow and myself longer than ever before in our lives. It was with the intention of re-establishing our old acquaintance that Carrow, stronger and more charger-like than formerly, welcomed me to the saddle on the morning that we set out. She snorted with pride as she saw me advance to her side, with my glittering armour all shining in the sun, and she seemed not to regard the weight of the cares which filled my breast—I who had just quitted my kind, good master, and bidden a sad farewell to the sweetest maid in London.

Brush was on this occasion left at home.



CHAPTER XXX.

THE EXPEDITION CROSSES TO FRANCE—SIEGE OF FOLANT CASTLE.

"Thanks to the gods! my boy has done his duty."

ADDISON'S *Cato*.



AFTER two days' weary travelling—for there was much heavy baggage to bring along—we came to Dover, having passed through Sevenoaks, Rochester, and Canterbury, and stayed the second night at Rochester. The ride was a lovely one, through a country which abundantly repaid the toil of the husbandman, and, at the time we passed through it (July), yellow with the standing corn, which was nearly ripe to harvest. We had no adventure on our road down, for robbers felt the propriety of giving so respectable a force unhindered passage; and but for the occasional necessity of dragging some unfortunate packhorse out of the miry holes in the road, or mending some piece of harness which had outlived service, our journey would have been without incident of any kind.

Oswald and I rode together on either side of Sir Hugh Calverley, who, quite jubilant at the prospect of some real fighting, anticipated the pleasures of combats to come by telling over and over again the story of many a heady fight he had shared in. So we beguiled the time between town and town, until at length we came to Dover. We had not travelled with more than our own company, which numbered with ourselves twelve men-at-arms, and twice that number of archers. The other knights in command of companies we met at Dover, the place appointed by the Earl of Buckingham for the rendezvous of his forces. Among

them were a few old friends — Sir Walter Hood, Will Allein, Lord Thomas Percy, and the Lord Fitzwater, with many more whom I now saw for the first time. The earl himself was a handsome gentleman, tall, broad-shouldered, and strongly knit; with a noble face worthy of a commander of men, and eyes which, while beaming with good-nature, had an expression that showed the dormant lion within their possessor. He was dressed, when I first saw him riding down the line in which we were drawn out in the courtyard of the castle, in a splendid suit of the finest armour, the helmet, an open one without visor or bever—a bacinet, in fact—surmounted by an eagle's wing; the breastplate richly inlaid with gold wrought into curious devices, with pouldrons and vambraces to protect the arms; his legs were guarded by cuissarts and greaves, with iron shoes. Across his right shoulder he wore a beautiful crimson scarf, from which hung, clanking against his side, a long two-edged sword which had seen service before he used it—in Palestine, and in many a subsequent encounter with French and Scot. With him were the young Earl of Devonshire, Lord Despencer, constable of the army, Lord Ferrars, Lord Darcey, Lord Morley, and the Lord de Saincte More, besides many others whose names are inscribed on "Fame's eternal bead-roll," and of some of whom I shall have occasion again to speak.

The morning was beautifully bright, and showed off to advantage the town and castle of Dover, which crowned the hill rising up from the shore where Cæsar's forces landed to conquer Britain. The sea shone like molten glass in the sunlight, which marked in strong relief the fleet of caracks and transports which lay within the port in readiness to convey the army. Against the white cliffs, which added to the glare of the sun, the deep green of their clothing showed most refreshingly, while within the lesser limits where the Earl of Buckingham reviewed his forces, the many colours of the knights' and soldiers' clothing appeared in vivid contrast to the old grey walls of the place which even in the time of the Romans had been deemed all-important as a military station.

From helmet to helmet the rays of light darted, dazzling the

eyesight, and when a man-at-arms moved he seemed to be luminous, his armour catching and throwing back the sunbeams, which could not pierce the thickness of his bright steel coat. It was certainly a pretty sight to see the different commanders, after the earl had passed their troops in review, leading their men out at the courtyard gate to form them into squadrons at the general muster which was to be held on the green slope outside the castle walls.

Sir Hugh Calverley, as one of the principal commanders, stood with the earl as the troops marched past, and he kept me there to be in readiness should he have occasion to communicate with his own division, which had passed out one of the first.

When the whole force had been thus inspected, the final orders were given about the baggage and munitions of war, which were to precede us on board the fleet. The Earl of Buckingham, attended by Sir Hugh Calverley, the Lord Despencer, and other chiefs, then quitted the castle and rode on to the slope where the whole army was drawn up, in company, squadron, and division. In accordance with arrangements previously made, the king's treasurer now paid to every man three months' pay in advance, and then the earl rode to each division and addressed a few words of counsel and exhortation to the men, after which the commanders, in order according to their degree, caused to be read aloud, so that all their men might hear, the rules and articles of war which the constable and earl marshal had prepared as the martial law for this particular expedition.*

* This is strictly in accordance with the practice of armies at that time. Of the men who followed the Earl of Buckingham on this occasion it is probable that few if any of them were the military tenants of the crown. The fact that they received three months' pay in advance would go against the supposition. They were probably, as far as the men-at-arms and archers went, professional soldiers, many of whom at this period were to be found in Europe, and who hired themselves out to fight for him who would give the best pay. For them, therefore, it was necessary that they should know the exact conditions under which they had to serve. The military law in all armies was identical on some points which were generally acknowledged, but the details of discipline varied in different services—in some, pillage

This ceremony having been gone through, the men were marched down under their respective commanders to the ships which were waiting to convey them to Calais. A short time sufficed to get them embarked; and then, the horses having been got on board, the baggage stowed away, and all being ready, we set sail from Dover with a fair wind, and in a few hours arrived safely at Calais three days before Magdalen Day, in the month of July, 1380.

The English garrison of Calais received us most kindly, and the Earl of Buckingham, having rested two days in the town, set out on his march towards Brittany, accomplishing five leagues the first day, which brought him to Marquignes. At this place a council of war was held to decide the route which should be taken, and that by Ardres being determined on, the army marched thither on the following day.

was allowed in part payment, in others, as in that of Harry V. at Agincourt, the rules against thieving were so strict that Bardolphs who stole nothing more than the "pyx of little price" had to pay the forfeit of their life.

The king, part of whose prerogative it was to create and administer martial law, was accustomed to frame a set of rules before going on an expedition, which rules formed the code of martial law to those engaged in it. One of these codes, compiled in the ninth year of Richard II., is still extant, and purports to be made with the advice of the Duke of Lancaster. The Lord High Constable and the Earl Marshal of England sat as joint Judges to administer martial law at home—their power was considerably curtailed during Richard's reign—and during a campaign their functions were discharged by the provost-martial acting under the authority of the general commanding the army.

At present martial law-giving is not a part of the royal prerogative, having been wrested from the crown by the Petition of Right, which Charles I. so unwillingly granted, and by the Bill of Rights, to which William of Orange assented. Martial law exists only by virtue of the Mutiny Act, which has to be annually passed, or there is no standing army, and by virtue of the Articles of War, which the sovereign is, by the Mutiny Act, authorized to make. The provisions of this Act and the Articles of War are equivalent to the rules which in old times the king, with the assistance of the constable and marshal, used to frame before setting out to war. They are the written laws by which courts-martial have to guide themselves; and it is such a law, though derived from another source—the king instead of the legislature—that is mentioned in the text as being read out to the Earl of Buckingham's men on the eve of departure.

F. D.

Both Oswald and myself were exceedingly struck by the novelty of the country, the people, and the language. It was our first visit to France, if I except the small occasions when we went with Dick Ashford to Peter's Haven, and the time when we ran into St. Malo harbour, in order to come out again. The houses were different, and, as I thought, less commodious than ours, having several stories, and staircases inside; they were, moreover, very ill glazed, and few had adopted the modern fashion of having windows. The dress of the people, too, was different; they still wore the long and cumbersome flowing skirt which with us had given way to lighter and less girding garments, and huge ungainly shoes which were the scorn and amusement of our modish gallants. As for their language, it certainly was not intelligible even to those amongst us who could fluently speak French at home, though for the most part we could manage to make them understand the nature of our wants, if not by words, by those natural means and signs which are not hard to be comprehended. We were much pleased with what we saw; and novelty, excitement, and the prospects of the war served most kindly to distract my attention from home thoughts, which, in spite of myself, would insist on having place.

At Ardres the earl knighted the Earl of Devonshire and the Lord Morley, and then moved on to Hosque, where an opportunity occurred for displaying the prowess of the new-made chevaliers, and where Oswald and I were allowed to play our part.

On the river which flows by Hosque, a little way above the town, was a handsome, strong house, owned by a squire named Robert Folant, who had garrisoned it with some forty men that he had procured in the neighbourhood, and ten or twelve archers whom the governor of St. Omer had sent him at his request when he heard the English were to pass his way.

The house was built like most of the better sort of houses, in a castellated form, with small, easily defensible doors and lower windows, and having, besides battlements round the coping of the roof, a large tower of stone, with numerous slits for archers. A wide ditch, with a small quantity of water and more mud in it,

ran round the garden, and was usually crossed by means of two drawbridges, which were now raised. A trumpet had been sent forward by Sir Thomas Percy, who commanded the vanguard, to summon Folant to surrender his house without giving us the trouble to take it; but Folant, trusting to the strength of his position, and to the strong determination which he evidently had to defend the place to the uttermost, declined to return him any answer at all.

The young Earl of Devon, and Lord Morley, Sir John Neville, and one or two more of the new knights, were standing by Sir Thomas when his messenger came back.

"See, Sir Thomas," said the Earl of Devon, "this Frenchman dares the whole English army. 'Tis meet he should be punished for his insolence, and as a knight but newly made I crave your leave to undertake the wholesome task."

"Join me with my lord of Devon," cried Morley; "it is not fair he should have the vantage-ground of me in the fight for fame, seeing we won our spurs on the same day."

"And I," "And I," chimed in their fellow-knights, till Sir Thomas Percy, willing to let them have their way, and pleased at the valour of which the request showed such promise, freely assented to the proposal, adding, however, that they should allow to bear them company in the expedition "these two lads," pointing to Oswald and myself, "of whom he knew something, but nothing to their disadvantage."

We, who were standing by at the time the gentleman spoke, looking wistfully, it is true, at the lucky warriors, but not liking, out of regard to their rank, to beg a place in their company, were but too glad to hear Sir Thomas's kind words, and, thanking him for the goodness he displayed towards us, gratefully accepted his proposal, provided Sir Hugh Calverley's permission could be obtained. This we were not long in getting, and it being about five o'clock in the afternoon of a fine summer day, we made ready to go forward to Folant with our gallant young masters. As it was an occasion which could only be served on foot, we left our horses in the camp, and dressed in our body armour, with close helmets,

and armed with sword, dagger, and a small axe apiece, we marched away in a company sixty strong in the direction of the castle. Knowing the character of the place, the Earl of Devon had been careful to provide himself with planks and a pair of ladders, which were dragged after us by some of the camp servants.

Half-past six o'clock found us at the edge of the ditch, the bridges over which were raised, and everything possible seemed to have been done to prevent our ingress to a place where "there was no entrance but for friends."

In order to give Folant one more chance after he should have seen that the English were in earnest, the Earl of Devon halted his company, unfortunately, within range of Folant's crossbows, and sent forward an esquire to summon the castle again.

The summons was made once, and twice, without eliciting the least answer from the place, and the esquire was about to renew his application, when whiz! whiz! came the arrows rushing from the castle walls, killing Miles Avory, the Lord Morley's squire, and wounding another of the men-at-arms.

"Cowards!" shouted the Lord Morley, "they shall dearly rue this. The curs have not manners enough to answer a peaceful challenge." And then, all angry with the slayers of poor Avory, Lord Morley took the head of the corpse, and his archer took the feet, and drew it apart under cover of some bushes till he should be able, as he observed, to assure the dead that his death had been fully avenged.

"This won't do," said the Earl of Devon, as the bolts came fast and thick; "scatter yourselves, men, and present as little mark as you can to yon knaves' bolts. We must carry this place by storming it, so now for volunteers to make the bridge."

The voices of all were heard to make answer to this call, and as only a third of the number were wanted for the service, the others were ordered to keep themselves under cover until the bridge should be made. The bridge-makers, under a smart shower of missiles which galled more than one with dangerous wounds, set boldly to work, but their comrades could not possibly obey the orders of the young earl, who himself set the example of disobe-

dience. The enemy, seeing from the castle the design we had in view, and knowing that if we crossed the ditch the day might go hard with them, resolved to prevent the completion of our purpose. Unbarring, therefore, the lower door of the house, a party, headed by Robert Folant, emerged from it, and, coming down to the bank opposite to that on which we were at work, prepared to annoy us in a way we could not reply to. For, with the chivalry of a noble knight, the Earl of Devon and his friends had scorned to avail themselves of such cowardly weapons as crossbows, and having, therefore, no means of replying to the enemy in kind, we were likely to suffer considerable loss from Folant and his men without a chance of giving them a *quid pro quo*. It was in view of this that the earl ran counter to his own orders. He could not endure the sight of the enemy, safe on the other side, using means which he scorned to employ, bringing down his followers with a vile arc as if they were so many crows. Calling, therefore, to the Lord Morley to hasten on the planking, he swore by his knighthood he would put a stop to the annoyance from the other side; so, drawing his sword and crying to those who listed to follow, he leaped down the face of the ditch, and commenced wading through the mud and water towards the opposite side.

It was a bold step, for the mud was thick and the water up to the thighs, and as he advanced he became each moment a better mark for the enemy's arrows. Several arrows, indeed, did strike him, and but for the goodness of his excellent armour, must have pierced him with a mortal wound. His position was eminently perilous, till some eight or ten of us, seeing his danger, and emulating his bravery, followed the example, and tried to wade across. Three of the bridge-makers had been stricken, besides one of the knights in the ditch. It behoved us to do something, and quickly too, if we did not mean to suffer a repulse.

"Come on, gentlemen!" shouted the earl. "Shall this pigeon-house stop us? Shall we soil our new honours by sitting down before such a place? Advance! advance! let us prove our knight-hoods!"

And so saying, he strode on through the heavy slime, and caught

hold of the grass on the enemy's bank. As soon as he did so, a rush was made towards the spot, and Folant's son, a youth of some twenty years, raised his sword with both hands, intending to cleave him through the helmet. It was a critical moment: the earl had not time to scramble on to the bank, and in the place where he was he could not use his bracer to cover his head. Happily for me, I was standing in the mud, about five feet away from my leader, vainly endeavouring to free my legs from the slime. I saw the danger, and instinctively, without calculating the chances or the distance, raised my right arm, which held a small Jedburgh axe, and hurled the weapon with all my might at young Folant's face. The lad wore an open helmet, without vizor or bever, and just as he was about to bring his deadly sword down upon the head of our gallant leader, my battle-axe caught him full in the face; the blood spurted out, suffusing his features with a crimson blush: the youth reeled backward, and fell heavily to the ground.

By this time several of our party had gained the bank; the earl had also scrambled up, and, in spite of the arrows which rattled now and again upon my armour, I managed to reach the same place. Robert Folant, leaving his son for dead, retreated with his followers to the house, closely pursued by such of our side as had got over. The bridge was also now completed, and the Lord Morley with the remainder of the company passing across it, came to reinforce us, who were disputing with our adversaries the re-barring of the door.

Being under cover of the walls of the castle, the bowmen could do us less harm than before, though up to the present moment we had lost two men killed outright, and had six more badly wounded. Oswald now joined us, and there was a desperate hand-to-hand fight for the possession of the doorway. Folant himself was there, doing deeds well worthy of knighthood; and the bold spirit which he displayed seemed to animate every one of his followers, so that the feats of arms done were many and splendid. But our friends secured the advantage. Axe, and sword, and mace whistled in the air as they were wielded by the strong arms of the stalwart

combatants; pieces of armour hacked off flew here and there: my own helmet was razed, and the visor torn off; Sir John Neville's shoulderpiece was lopped away, and the Earl of Devon's plume was shaven clean off. Nor had the enemy fared much better. Young Folant lay on the grass-plot more dead than alive, his father was worn out and faint from loss of blood, and many of the brave fellows who withstood our entrance showed ghastly and grim signs of the vigour of our attack. They could not succeed in again closing the barrier; and Robert Folant, despairing of success, and satisfied that at all events he had done enough to deserve it, complied with the summons which the earl's humanity dictated, and surrendered himself and his castle into our hands.

As soon as the prisoners were secured, our first care was to look after the wounded. Young Folant, though badly hurt, was not mortally wounded, the damage being rather to his beauty than his health. We bound up his wounds and placed him along with our own disabled men in the captured castle, and, leaving two of our number to attend to their wants, we marched back with the prisoners to the camp at Hosque.

Many and sincere were the congratulations which poured upon the young knights who had acquitted themselves so well; and when the Earl of Buckingham, hearing from the Earl of Devon what I had done towards saving his life, thanked me publicly before the assembled warriors, I felt as if I would not willingly change places with the noblest knight who carried sword in the army. Sir Hugh Calverley spoke kindly and encouragingly to me, and my friends gave me the congratulations of well-wishers who did not envy me my good fortune.

We lay that night at Hosque, in order to wait for Sir William Windsor, who commanded the rear-guard. The following morning we set out for Esperlech, and arrived the same night before St. Omer.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE ATTACK ON TROYES—DEATH OF SIR WALTER HOOD— A FRENCH PRISON.

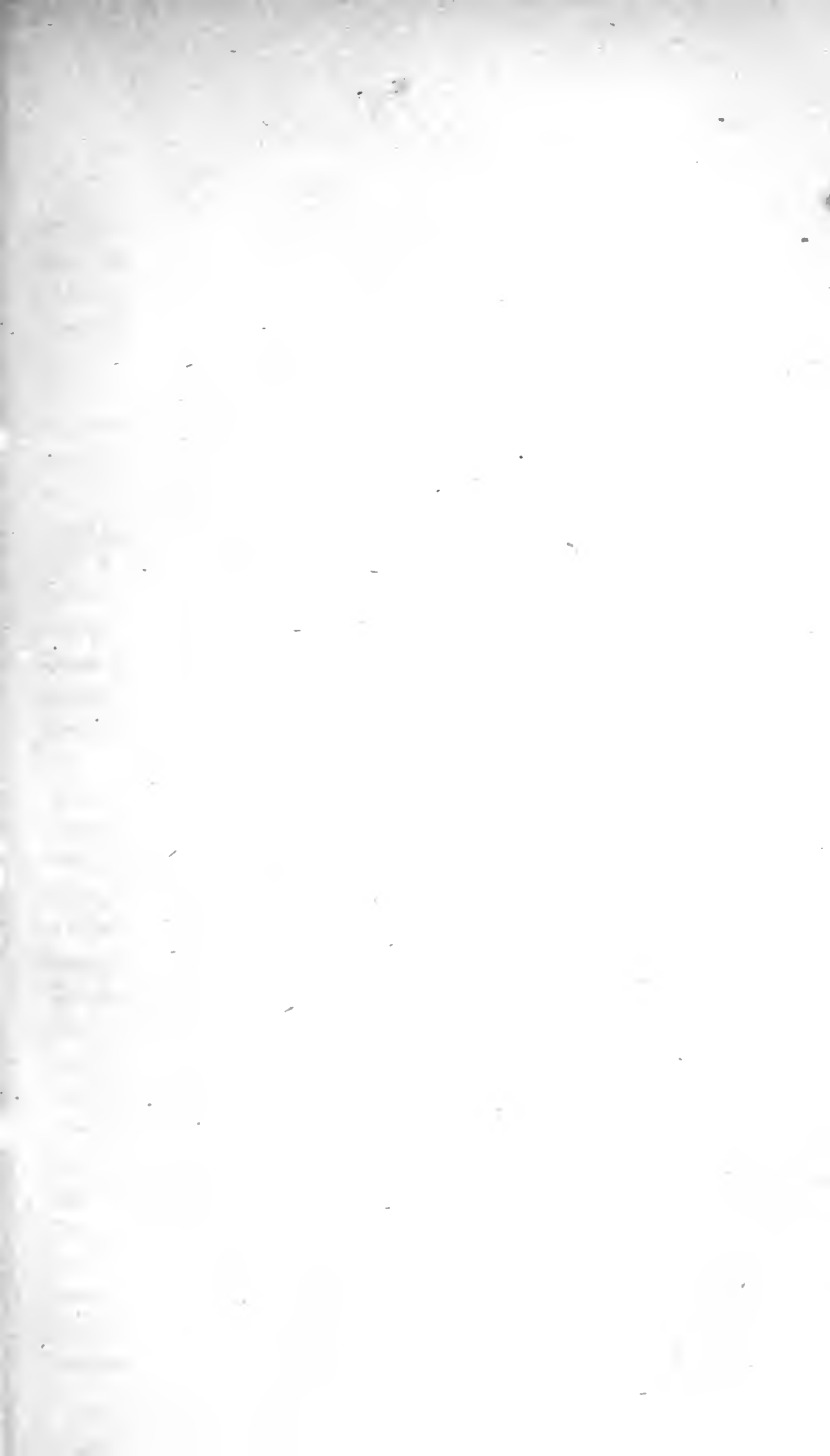
“ But soone as they him nigh approching spide,
They gan with all their weapons him assay,
And rudely stroke at him on every side.”

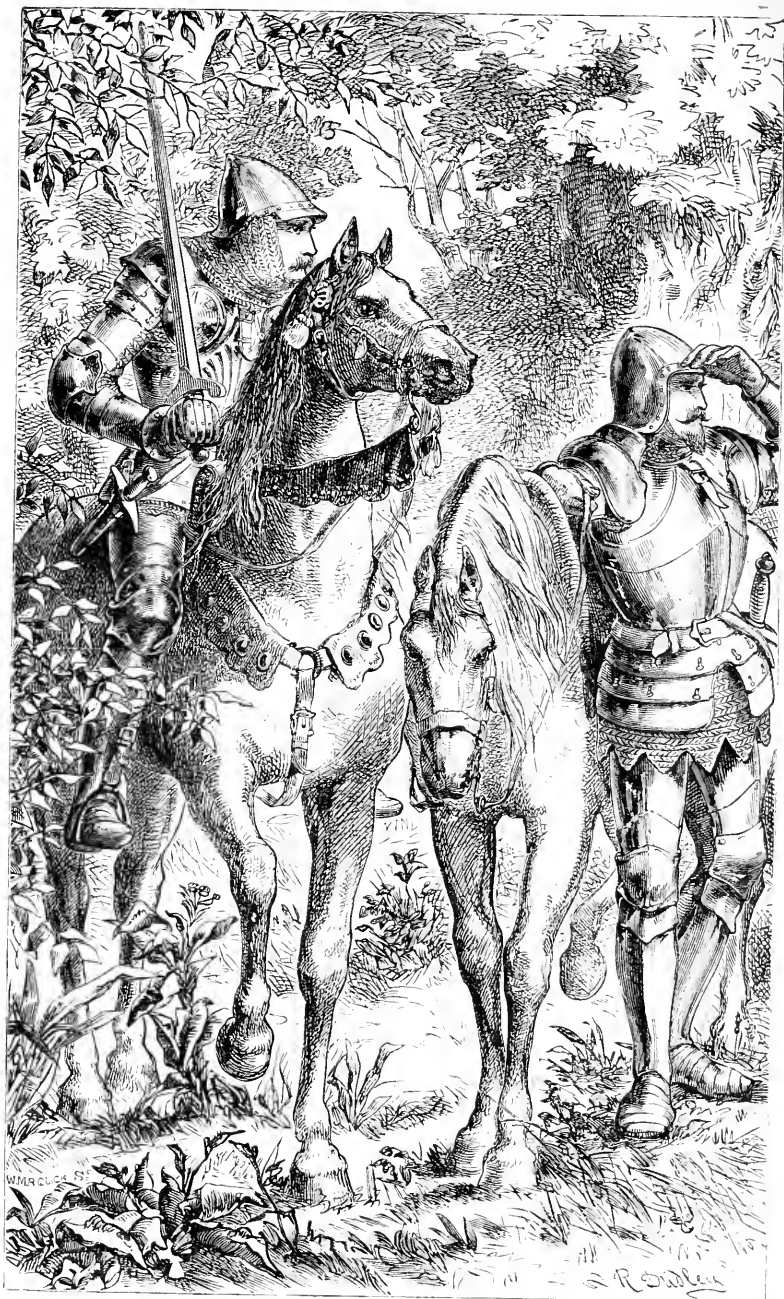
Faerie Queene.



SEVERAL days now elapsed, during which we continued our march in the direction of Brittany, passing by the towns of St. Omer, Esquilles, Terouenne, and Miraumont, and meeting with various adventures more or less diverting by the way.

Peter Barton, a man-at-arms in Lord Delawarr's troop, gained great honour to himself by very valiantly attacking the French Lord de Hangest, and would certainly have taken him but for an untoward accident which deprived him of his prey; Fierabras, the bastard brother of Lord Delawarr, took a squire of the Duke of Burgundy's, a very expert man-at-arms; and many more valiant deeds were done of which it were long to write. The army continued its march as far as the city of Troyes, where the Duke of Burgundy, with a large force of knights and men-at-arms, was in garrison, with the intention of fighting the English between the rivers Seine and Yonne. But the French king, mindful of former losses, had forbidden him to attack the enemy unless he could do so at great advantage. Before the city of Troyes a council of war was held, the result of which was that a herald was despatched with the following message from the Earl of Buckingham to demand a battle: "Tell the lords within this city that we are come from England in search of deeds of arms. Wherever we think they can be found, there we shall demand them; and because we





HUBERT AND OSWALD RECONNOITRE THE ENEMY'S POSITION.

know that a part of the lilies and chivalry of France repose in the town of Troyes, we have purposely come this road. If they wish to say anything to us, they will find us in the open plain in the form and manner in which you shall leave us, and in such wise as we ought to meet our enemies."

Whilst the herald had gone forward with this message, the knights of the English party prepared for the encounter they looked upon as certain, displayed their banners, and decided upon the positions they would take up. Oswald and I, having attended to our duties near Sir Hugh Calverley, were sent forward to ascertain what we could concerning the position of the enemy; so, mounting our horses, and completely armed, we rode by a path much overhung with sheltering bushes towards the town of Troyes.

We approached unobserved to within six hundred yards of the barrier, and then saw that about a bow-shot away from the city gate a large redoubt had been made out of felled trees and great beams of timber, sufficiently large to hold a thousand men-at-arms, and at this time crowded with them. The Duke of Burgundy, sheathed in steel from head to foot, his body being further covered with a rich gambeson, made of crimson and white velvet smothered with gold, and seated on a splendid black charger, reviewed his soldiers as they marched to the redoubt. A large number of knights remained with him at the gate, whilst a considerable body, under the Count d'Eu and Sir John de Vienne, held the space in the rear and on either side of the fort. The sight was certainly charming. From the rising ground on which we were both armies were visible; the sun, which had now burst forth in full summer splendour, shone with a reflected radiance on the steel helmets and breastplates of the warriors; swords flashed their mimic lightnings as they caught the rays on their polished surface; and here and there the gorgeous richness of a brass-armoured knight made it seem as if the sun had transformed its own very self into the likeness of a gallant warrior. The gay pennons, the broad banners of the greater lords, the white tents of the English army on the one side, and the sombre-looking walls of Troyes on the other, relieved the eye from the glare of the glittering steel, and the

whole made up as splendid a picture as could be found for the background of lovely green trees and harvest-laden fields, through which the rivers Seine and Yonne flowed quietly. Now came the braying of trumpets from either side; horses got restive, plunging and rearing, impatient as their riders; banners waved as they were borne along by their attendant squires; men-at-arms were seen rushing here and there, carrying to the commanders of the different divisions the final orders of the commander-in-chief. The walls of Troyes were crowded by an eager mass of citizens, curious at all times to see a sight, and doubly curious in the present instance, because of the interest they themselves had in the issue of the contest. Sir Hugh Calverley's company occupied the extreme right of the English line, from which we were now distant about half a mile; and next to it, nearer the enemy, was the company commanded by Sir Walter Hood.

"They will not hear our heralds," cried Oswald, pointing in the direction of the city, from which, indeed, Gloucester and Aquitaine, kings of arms, were returning at a smart trot, without having passed beyond the redoubt.

"It looks so, truly," I answered; "yet it may hardly be that so courteous a prince as the Duke of Burgundy should refuse to receive our royal captain's message. There must be some mistake."

And so I believe there was. Either the heralds exceeded their commission, and angered the French troopers with bold words, so that they would not let them continue their journey, or the press around the redoubt was so great that it was not possible they could get through. The heralds said that they were threatened, and had to make the best of their way back.

By this time, however, it behoved us to return to our company. Some of the knights on the left of the line, burning to prove their knighthood, and not waiting, as they should have done, for the general's orders, had begun to skirmish, and some valiant feats were already being done. To our astonishment, we saw among them the pennon of brave Sir Walter Hood, who seemed bent on showing the younger warriors the brightest road to fame. Mounted on a superb black charger, and radiant in his coat of steel, we saw

him, followed by one whom we knew to be Will Allein, riding boldly to the front with scarcely any supports.

There was a large barricade erected between the redoubt and the gate where the duke and his barons stood, about five feet high and full two feet broad. Towards this barricade Sir Walter spurred without his lance, but sword in hand, his target round his neck, and his good battle-axe swinging on his wrist. Whether he had a vow on him I know not, but there he rushed, like a bolt from a crossbow, straight for the obstacle behind which lay the French host. Not less boldly did Will Allein, on his strong Flemish horse, ride after him, the two together charging an army. On they sped, rapidly lessening the distance which divided safety from peril, until they came within ten yards of the stiff barricade. Here an archer more cruel than his brethren, who had forborne to mar such noble work by their cowardly art, let fly his crossbow at poor Will Allein's horse. The bolt struck the horse, and stretched both him and his rider at length on the green grass.

"Coward!" shouted Hood, with furious rage, "you shall shoot no more of those cursed bolts, I swear, by the Mother of God!"

And gathering his horse well together, he put him at full speed at the barrier. Amid the silent admiration of both armies, horse and rider rose into the air; the noble charger made no difficulty about the barrier, and, clearing it as if it had been something very different to what it was, came down amongst the terrified mass of townsmen and soldiers who were collected behind it as though he had been the god of war himself, just whetting his appetite for the prey.

The words which Sir Walter had spoken to the bowman were not idle words. He shot no more bolts, for before the people had recovered from the surprise into which the bold feat just done had thrown them, Sir Walter had dashed the man's brains out with his battle-axe, and was preparing to cut his way back the same route by which he had come.

"Stop him! stop him!" cried the voices of those who, being in the rear, were not within the swing of that terrible axe which

Sir Walter brandished over his head with a motion that looked ominous to the imprudent who should venture close.

"That knight must not escape!" shouted the Duke of Burgundy, himself preparing to bar the bold horseman's way; and forthwith a break was made in the ranks about him, and five or six young knights rode out to meet Sir Walter.

"Do not kill him," cried the duke; "he has done too nobly to be butchered; bring him here prisoner, and my sword shall be the guerdon."

Sir Walter was just measuring his distance from the barrier, and again getting ready to take his flying leap, when Sir Gerard de Saintonge and the Lord de Couçi called upon him to yield himself prisoner.

"Never!" answered Sir Walter, with as much disdain as he showed the Londoners when they were about to behead him at the Standard in Cheap; but, deeming it no disgrace to retreat from before the odds which he had so bravely dared, he clapped spurs to his horse, and put him at the barrier.

The faithful creature obeyed the will of his master to the very last. He answered the call made upon him with a will, and had just risen to clear the top edge of the boards, when he fell suddenly, heavily, pierced through the heart by the Lord de Couçi's lance.

The act was an unknightly one, if intended, which Lord de Couçi declared afterwards it was not. He had meant to strike the rider, but his own horse swerved, and the lance which should have stricken Sir Walter buried itself in the flanks of his noble steed. Surely Will Allein was avenged in a double sense. Sir Walter's own act at Smithfield was now repeated on himself, and the Frenchman who laid poor Will low had been sent whither he would do no more mischief.

Sir Walter fell with his horse heavily to the ground. He lay motionless, encased in his armour, the pride of manhood which late had shone in him now withered and crushed—the valiant man-at-arms lay helpless as a new-born babe. Sir Gerard de Saintonge, the Lord de Couçi, and several other knights who had

now come up, went to where the prostrate man lay, with the charitable intention of relieving him from his position. Blood oozed out from the closed visor of the helmet, and stained all the bever with a crimson dye. Sir Walter made no answer to the friendly calls upon his name. Slowly and with difficulty the French knights drew him from the body of the horse with which he was entangled. They laid him on the sward just inside the barrier, and hastened to divide the cumbrous joints of his armour. The fastenings of the helmet undone, and the heavy headpiece removed, the pale face of Sir Walter Hood appeared. The colour had fled from his cheek, his hair was bedabbled with blood, the eyes were closed, the lips slightly open, and from between them the red blood still gurgled as he lay on the ground. Alas for Sir Walter! his gallant course was run, his last blow struck, his last thrust delivered. The force with which he had fallen to the ground had broken some large blood-vessels in the chest. He never spoke again. Once only, when Sir Gerard raught him his hand, and spake his praise aloud, thinking him to be dead, did an expression as of satisfaction flit across his face, and then the lofty spirit which lately had animated his body passed away for ever.

I have already said that it behoved us to turn back and rejoin our company. We had gained by observation such a knowledge of the enemy's position as amply repaid us for our pains, and had just turned our horses' heads in the direction of the camp, when we found a party of the enemy, numbering eight in all, that had got between us and it, and were preparing to cut us off. What to do we scarcely knew. It seemed the height of madness for us two boys to engage eight well-appointed men-at-arms, while running away was as far from our liking as the almost inevitable alternative of being taken prisoners. Our horses were fresh—Carrow I knew I could trust to; and after the briefest possible conference we agreed to do what, under the circumstances, could not be attributed to cowardice.

Away we went at a splendid pace, the horses seeming to understand the need there was for hurry, and in three minutes had got

a good lead of our pursuers, who, having started in chase, were toiling after us on their heavier steeds, more heavily weighted. We were obliged to make a slight *détour* to get on to the roadway, which would be easier for the horses, and enable them to increase the lead. The Frenchmen divined our motive, and thinking with us that if we gained the road we should be safe, endeavoured their utmost to prevent us. All promised well till we neared the hedge which separated the field from the causeway. We were congratulating ourselves on the lucky escape we were making, and laughing at the annoyance we were causing our hard-riding friends behind, when Oswald's horse suddenly put one of his fore-feet in a rut, fell forwards, and lay useless upon the ground.

"Do not stop, Hubert!" cried Oswald, as he picked himself up. "Those wretches are close upon us. Go on, Hubert—go. Leave me here; better one than two taken."

"God forbid," said I, "that I should leave you thus!" So, drawing rein upon Carrow, I pulled her up, and calling to Oswald to draw his sword, drew my own, and waited for our foes.

They did not keep us long in suspense, but, laughing and mocking at our mishap, came up apace, and bade us surrender.

"Not yet!" we cried together. "You must fight us before you take us!"

"Take your fate, then, fools!" roared a brutal-looking man, who seemed to be the leader of the party, as he dealt a blow at my head which, had it lighted there, would have cloven me to the chin. Carrow, obedient to the slightest touch of my knee, swerved aside as the blow descended. I caught the man's sword on my own, and before he had time rise it again, I dealt him a return blow which gashed his sword arm right down, and sent him reeling from his saddle.

Oswald seized the wounded man's bridle and leapt into his seat, gave the reins a shake, and we were just off again, when the rest of the party came up. They attacked us at once and furiously; blows showered on us like rain, some of them taking effect upon the unguarded parts of our bodies. My left arm was badly cut across the shoulder, a great gash on the leg testified to some un-

chivalrous blow below the girdle, and repeated blows had riven my helmet. Oswald, too, was wounded in several places. It was folly in us to go on till we must needs be slain, when our deaths would profit no one, and we had already done enough to save our honour. Three of the enemy disabled, and two others slightly wounded, showed we had not striven in vain. It was only when our strength failed us, and we saw no chance of escape, that we complied with the demand imposed by necessity, and yielded ourselves prisoners.

Carrow, who seemed to comprehend the state of things, and who, no less than her master, disliked the condition of captivity, as soon as I was dismounted, turned herself about, and, with a sort of defiance, galloped off to the English camp.

We were disarmed and taken straight to the town of Troyes, and there, the battle outside being still toward, placed at once in the castle ward, the question of who we were and what should be done with us being reserved for a more leisure opportunity.



CHAPTER XXXII.

OUR ESCAPE FROM TROYES.

"They called the porter to counsell,
And wrang his neck in two,
And caste hym in a depe dungeon,
And toke hys keys hym fro."

Adam Bell.



SUPPOSE prisons are not meant to be pleasant places. Ours certainly was not one. It was in the castle of Troyes, which is situated at the extreme end of the town, upon a little stream that runs into the Seine. To this castle we were brought through the streets of the town, faint and very weary, and thrust into an apartment which gave rise to the reflection at the head of this chapter. It measured ten feet long and eight broad, the roof being seven feet from the floor, which was made of stone flags, rudely cemented together. One small window, strongly barred, that might have been used as a bow-slit, admitted a few rays of light into the room, and a narrow chimney, now filled with lumber, furnished the only means of ventilation. At the best of times it must have been a sorry place, but now, with the stifling heat of an August day, for two grown lads to be huddled into it was almost insupportable. A low settle was all the furniture there was, if I except two massive iron rings which were properly secured in the solid masonry, and whose duty it did not need a wizard to guess.

I threw myself down on the settle, tired, consumed with thirst, and my wounds, which were undressed, aching most painfully. A flood of thoughts rushed through my mind in fantastic succession. I thought of home, of the dear hearts I had left there, of the present campaign, the storm off Plymouth, of Battle Abbey, of

Father Austin, Dick Ashford, Alice, poor dead D'Arey, Sir Walter Hood, and the French gaoler who had locked us up. In a sort of half-sleeping state I lay, while Oswald, more curious and less spent, busied himself with examining the walls of our prison, and taking a minute survey of the different means of communication with the outside.

I soon sank into a deep slumber, wherein I dreamed I was once more at Brooklet with my noble father and good Father Gervase, the priest. The old place came familiarly before me, and I was once more a blithe, careless lad, ranging whithersoever I listed. Then Alice came, and Master Philpot, my father, and all the scenes of my earlier days. I dreamed that Master Wyclif was about to be seized by Bishop Courtney's guards, and I was putting out my hand to hold one of them back when I was suddenly awoke at some resistance offered to my arm, and found I had hit Oswald, who lay on the floor beside me, full in the face with the back of my hand.

"Plague on you!" said Oswald, slowly awaking from the sleep I had disturbed. "Have you not had enough blows for one day that you must needs provoke more? You hit hard enough when you are asleep to knock a Frenchman down."

"A hundred pardons, Oswald!" I said. "You must forgive me. I have been dreaming."

"So I should think," replied he, "to judge from the way you have been going on, talking such a farrago of nonsense about things that happened whole ages ago, and crying out to Will Archdale not to ride so fast, just as if you were at old Battle again, instead of in this cursed town of Troyes. I thought you were fooling me, and went to sleep to avoid getting angry."

"Has anything happened while I have been asleep?" inquired I.

"That solemn-looking clown who locked us in has been to have a look at us, and see we wanted nothing to make us—uncomfortable. But I do him wrong; he brought us this pitcher of water and this flask of wine, promised to bring us some supper, and, as well as his nature would let him, was quite civil."

I took a long draught at the welcome jug, and having been

already much refreshed by sleep, rose from the settle more like my former self.

"What sort of place are we in, Oswald?" I said. "You have been looking about you. To judge from the shape of the room, this should be in one of the towers."

"So it is," answered he, "and we are on the second story. I got into a talk with old Grimsmile just now, and from what I could make out from his abominable jargon we are about thirty feet from the ground, and are in the tower nearest to the city wall. The old man confessed that the duke has had a thrashing from our fellows, too."

"That of course," said I; "but had he anything to say about the disposal of ourselves? whose prisoners we are? what is to be done with us?"

"Not a word; close as a thumbscrew about that. Knew nothing, or pretended to know nothing. I doubt they mean to let us out easily."

"Then we must look to the matter ourselves," said I; "we cannot remain here."

"Precisely what I've been thinking," answered Oswald; "and, what is more, I do not imagine, from what I see of the place, that there will be so much difficulty in the way of getting out as at first sight appears. There are just three ways of doing it: one is to bribe old Grimsmile, or whatever his name is, and so get out; the second is to make him prisoner when he comes in here, and take our chance of passing through the gate unobserved; the third is to bore some of these stones out, or climb that chimney, and so get into the open."

"The last would be a work of time, Oswald, and the drop from this to the ground would be a dangerous matter, to say nothing of the drop from the top of the tower. For the first plan, I think it not so good as the second. Supposing the warder would not be bribed, he would be certain to give information of our having made offers to him; we should be more closely guarded, and then good-bye to your scheme of burrowing through the walls. I am decidedly in favour of the second."

"Perhaps it would be best," answered he, "and the sooner we set about it the better. What do you say to trying this evening? The old fellow will be round presently with our supper."

Our conversation was here interrupted by the grating of a key in the lock of the massive door of our cell; the bolts were turned back, the door opened, and the gaoler, attended by one of his under-skinkers bearing a tray of provisions, and accompanied by a reverend-looking man, clad in a black taffeta robe edged at the collar and cuffs with white lawn, entered the cell.

The servant placed the tray upon the ground; the gaoler examined the window and the chimney to see that nothing in his department had been tampered with, and then bidding us good night, retired with his man, leaving us alone with the other person he had brought with him. This proved to be a surgeon sent by the Duke of Burgundy, to whom our case had been reported, to dress our wounds. Grateful indeed were this good man's services. Several hours had elapsed since we had received our hurts, which were now stiff and aching, and considering the position and size of them, it was perhaps as well that we were prevented from carrying our scheme into execution before they could be attended to. From the surgeon we learned the issue of the day's fight; how that the skirmishing around the redoubt had been fierce and long, many being slain on either side, and a few taken prisoners. One knight whom we had no difficulty in identifying with Sir Hugh Calverley appeared to have struck cold terror into the hearts of the French. In vain they had resisted at the barriers, backed up by the support which the bravest of the Burgundian chivalry could give; the onset of Sir Hugh, and others of the same way of hitting, was too much for them. After a stout resistance they had forsaken the redoubt, leaving many of their comrades to lard the plain, and themselves retreating under the protection of the city walls. The surgeon spoke of one whom men told him was the Earl of Devon, as one who had done most heroic deeds, whilst the Earl of Buckingham himself had not withstood the temptation of fleshing his sword in the carcasses of the French. Will Allein had been picked up and carried to the

English camp, and a report had come in—for both armies had seen him fall, and been interested in the gallant young man—that, though badly hurt, he was not mortally wounded. So far all was well. The surgeon having dressed our wounds, and made us feel much more at our ease, withdrew, promising to visit us again the next day at an earlier hour.

As soon as he had gone we fell to on the provisions like hungry, hearty youths, and then, thoroughly worn out with the fatigues of the day, slept soundly for several hours.

Next morning we renewed the discussion of our plan for breaking prison. At one time we proposed to catch the doctor instead of the gaoler, as being the more easy to manage, but then the ingratitude of such an act shamed us, and we finally decided to make the attempt upon our grim friend to whom we owed nothing. From our supper the night before, and from our meals this day, we saved as much of the meat supplied to us as we could conveniently carry, for the purpose of nourishing us after we should have made our escape. The leech returned, according to his promise, at an early hour in the day. He again dressed our wounds and comforted us, adding, by way of observation, a statement of which we drank in every word, that as it was not considered by the men who captured us that we, being but squires, were at all likely to be ransomed for any large sum, they meant to send us, in return for a given sum of money, with a party of men-at-arms about to leave France to take service in Africa against the Moors.

This was a bit of pleasing intelligence which certainly had not the effect of making us defer the execution of our plan. After the surgeon had left we laid us down to sleep, in anticipation of the fatigues we should surely have to undergo that night. Rising refreshed and thoroughly rested, we waited with impatience for the shades of evening which should bring the gaoler with our supper and our freedom. A thousand obstacles presented themselves to our fancy as likely to interfere with our project, failure in which would consign us to the double infamy, as we thought it, of serving under Frenchmen and fighting with infidel Moors. What if our captors should remove us this very afternoon? What

if they should come with the gaoler himself, and so frustrate our intentions? We might have been overheard arranging our plans. Measures might have been specially taken to entrap us. We fatigued our minds with imagining all sorts of mischances, till we heard on the staircase outside our cell the deliberate footfall of our prison-keeper. The wards of the lock flew back into their rusty sockets, the door swung slowly on its hinges, and, O joy! Grimsmile (for we adopted Oswald's name for him) alone entered the apartment, bearing the supper he had destined for us. Who ate it I know not; but as for the bearer, as soon as he had got into the room, Oswald, in accordance with a preconcerted plan, pushed the door to, and then springing on to the gaoler's back while I caught hold of both his arms by the wrists, threatening instant death if he ventured to make any noise, brought the man to the ground and pinioned his arms behind him. We had already debated whether or not we should gag him, and having decided that it would not be safe to trust to any amount of promises of silence when we should not be there to enforce them, we placed a stop-noise into his mouth, and, taking his dagger and keys for our own use, prepared to run the risks of discovery on our outward journey.

No time was to be lost; the gaoler would soon be missed, and then our escape would be known. We opened the door, which we carefully locked behind us, descended two flights of stairs, and found ourselves in a dark passage, at neither end of which was there any light. Feeling our way along this in the direction which we supposed must lead to the body of the castle—for we could not recognise in the gloom which was around us the way by which we had been brought in—our further passage was barred by an iron door which defied all our efforts to open it. Groping in the dark we found the lock, and tried several of the keys on the gaoler's bunch, but in vain—not one of them would open it. We were almost in despair at this unlooked-for obstruction, and were making up our minds to the disappointment of our hopes, when we heard voices at the other end of the corridor, and saw the reflection of light from a torch which was borne in our direc-

tion. The passage was curved, and as the light shone on one side of the wall we crouched down on the opposite one, hoping against hope that the men we heard would not be coming to the iron door. The steps came nearer and nearer, the voices sounded closer, and we were doubting whether to go forward and give ourselves up, or to make an attempt to rush by the comers, when suddenly the footfalls became deadened, the voices were heard in another direction, and we remained undiscovered, huddled together by the iron door. This incident served to show us two things—that the passage probably led to some staircase at the other end, communicating with the way to the outer rooms, and that there was another passage turning out of this one, between one end and the other, which also must lead to the inhabited part of the castle. As soon as the footsteps died away we felt our way back along the inner wall, and sure enough at about ten feet from where we lay we found an opening in it, which we had failed to notice on our way down when we had guided ourselves by the outer wall.

Down this passage we now turned, and going to the bottom of it, came to a curtained doorway which we knew must lead to some chamber. Light streamed through into the passage as I cautiously drew the curtain enough on one side to enable me to see into the room. It was the guard-room, a large handsome apartment, furnished with weapons and implements of war, and probably serving the double purpose of guard-room and armoury. A table stood on one side of the room with a number of benches about it, on which were lolling, as if asleep, some eight or ten soldiers. Their swords and helmets were lying about on the floor and table just as they had thrown them off before sitting down: flagons that had held wine, and remnants of supper, were on the table. For all that I could see, the men were asleep.

Now we felt certain that, this being the guard-room, it must lead immediately, if not to the outer hall, at least to some place communicating with it. It behoved us, therefore, to pass through it and get out at the door opposite to that at which we stood. But then some of the men might be dozing merely—the watch might come in—the hounds which lay upon the hearth might give the

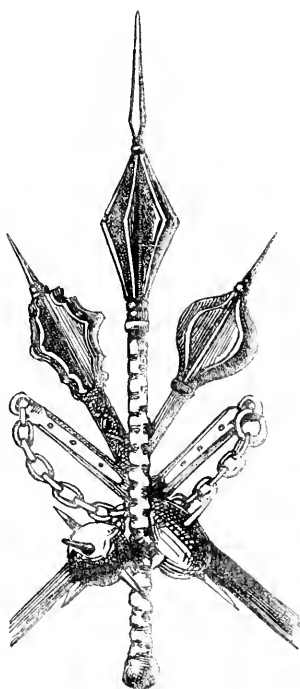
alarm—a hundred things might happen to thwart us. Go through we must, however, and take our chance. So, whispering to Oswald to snatch up a helmet and sword for himself as we went past the table, and designing to do the same for myself, I drew back the curtain and crept stealthily into the room. My companion followed, and we advanced safely into the middle of the chamber. The prize I sought I took from the table near me. Oswald succeeded in laying hands on what he wanted, and we were just passing out at the opposite door, when a burly man-at-arms, who was sitting with his back to us, moved in his chair, and, half asleep, growled out, “Who goes there?”

We neither of us dared to answer. I hurried through the doorway, and heard the soldier, who did not rouse himself completely out of his sleep, say in a drowsy tone, as if he thought it did not much matter, “Plague on you, John! why can ye not answer?” evidently thinking it was one of the watch.

Oswald ventured to answer, “Good night!” to which the soldier mumbled some reply, and then, deeming it imprudent to tarry, we went out into the passage. The freshness of the air showed us we were nearing the outer court. The helmets we had stolen, being those worn by the soldiers of the guard, disguised us as two of them, and, trusting to the deceit, we walked boldly forward. We soon came to a turn in the passage, where, depositing the keys belonging to the poor gaoler, we found ourselves in the entrance-hall of the castle. Several soldiers were walking about it, and a number more were lying on benches asleep. The sconce which illuminated the hall was swung high up, so that a shadow was cast upon our faces, concealed by the helmets, and the oil having burned low, there was but a dim light in the place. Seeing our helmets, and not observing any hesitation in our walk, the soldiers took us for some of the guard, and as we passed out of the great door, bade us a good night, which we returned.

Once more in the open air, and free, but not yet out of danger, the same good fortune which had attended us hitherto waited on us still into the town. We passed the gates of the fortress without being challenged, and before dawn found ourselves a good four

miles from Troyes, on the road to Calais. To join the English army would be almost impossible. It had left, in what direction we could not ascertain, and the Lords De Couçi and Saimpi lay between it and us, with a large force of men-at-arms and archers. The Calais road we reckoned would be tolerably free, so that road we took, walking the whole distance; and on the fourth day after leaving Troyes we arrived again in the friendly town of Calais, whence we took shipping in the course of a very few days for Dover, for we were told that the English would not prosecute to the end this expedition into Brittany.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

WHY THE COMMONS OF ENGLAND WERE DISSATISFIED WITH THE LORDS.

"Tax has tenet us alle
Probat hoc mors tot validorum;
The kyng therof hade smalle
Fuit in manibus cupidorum."

Political Song of the Period.



THE information we had at Calais was correct. The expedition was not carried out in consequence of the double dealing of the Duke of Brittany, who, having invited the assistance of the English, did not scruple, when they came, to enter into an understanding with the King of France not to employ them against him. Various tricks were

resorted to in order to carry out this arrangement, so that the English, after exposing themselves to great risk and loss in their bold march through France, were like to have been rewarded for their pains by being placed dishonourably between two stools, and so falling to the ground. Not long after our escape, the Earl of Buckingham's army returned to England, the leaders vowing that all the plagues of Egypt should light on their heads if ever again they drew sword on behalf of the Duke of Brittany.

Sir Walter Hood was universally regretted. The whole army knew him for a valiant warrior, a strict performer of his duty, and a man true to his word. The Duke of Burgundy had most courteously given up his body to the custody of two English knights who came to ask for it. It was honourably cared for, and, the chief men of the army attending, buried with all solemnity by friendly hands. My lord of Lancaster lost a faithful servant, the English army a brave man-at-arms, and the saints, I trust, gained an accession of one to their number, by the death of Sir Walter Hood.

Will Allein, whose mishap we witnessed before our own took place, was fetched away by some soldiers of his company, and carried in safety to our camp. The bolt which slew his horse—the same Sir Walter had forced upon his acceptance—had left him unscathed; but the violence of the fall, encumbered as he was by his armour, had severely shaken him, and a cruel fever, begotten of the accident, laid him up for many days in the neighbourhood of Troyes. Unable to accompany the English army, he had been committed to the care of some peasant-folk, who carefully tended him; and as the generosity of the French gentry forbade them to use their advantage by detaining him as a prisoner of war, he was able at the expiration of three weeks to bear removal to Calais, where he found shipping, and so passed over into England.

Sir Hugh Calverley had been much distressed at the presumed loss of his two esquires. No news could be gathered about us from the French prisoners who were taken. Sir Hugh fully concluded that we were no more, and regretted our deaths with all the sincerity of his kind and ardent nature. Judge of his surprise on finding us alive and well when he returned, shortly after our arrival, to London, and when he heard for the first time the story of our misadventure.

Master Philpot, upon whom the cares of many things began to press heavily, was rejoiced to see us once more alive and doing fairly.

It was arranged at this time that Oswald, who had been in his employ for several years, should now quit it and join his father,

who, having upon him the responsibilities of a large business, required the aid of his son to assist him in bearing them. I, of course, remained with the man who had adopted me, happy in seeing to the due discharge of his many affairs, and doubly happy in that such occupation enabled me to spend my joyful days in the society of the maiden in whose absence I began to feel vexed and troubled. This position brought me into contact with many of the most important persons who existed at that time. Master Philpot having been some months since appointed treasurer and disburser of the grants voted by the commons in Parliament to the king, he who took part in the matter for him — and it was I who did so — was constantly thrown with the councillors and Parliament men, concerning whom, and especially the former, I soon got to learn many things to their disadvantage. They would have induced me, for sums of money, to account for money not spent as though it had been used in the king's service, on the understanding that they were to have the proceeds of my iniquity. Offers of place and preferment were repeatedly hinted at; and when these proved futile, threats and false reports were resorted to. For the former, I despised them; and as to the latter, I knew they could not hurt me. Strong in the support which a clear conscience gave me, I went on my way fearing nothing.

I continued in this mode of life for full a year, during which Master Philpot's mayoralty expired, and many events happened of which it were long to write; but some there are which must needs be mentioned, because of the bearing they have on those which are to come.

Except the incursions of the Scots upon the northern borders of England, which were so frequent as to be looked upon as regular, there were few things at home which demanded special mention; but abroad there happened many which, if nothing else, were unmistakeable signs of the temper of the times. The people of Flanders, enraged by the oppressive conduct of their count, rose upon him and waged war. He, in turn, besieged their cities, and committed horrible cruelties wherever he entered. They were not backward to set an example to all burgesses strong enough to

hold their own how they should resent tyranny in their lords, and were so far successful in their attempts as to bring the count to an understanding with them. King Charles V. of France had also died during this interval, and was succeeded by his son, aged eleven years. At the coronation of the young prince there had been serious tumults in Paris. The commons, who had risen some years before, and committed horrible excesses under the name of the *Jacquerie*, after the battle of Poitiers, now rose again, but with better cause and also with better success. They clamoured against their nobles, whom they charged with cowardice in allowing the English to range the kingdom unmolested, to destroy the villages, and vex the people. They also cried bitterly against the heavy taxes, which were sternly enforced and wantonly squandered, and declared that, rather than live under such poor-spirited lords, or pay such heavy taxes, they would offer their allegiance to their enemies the English, who would protect and govern them more mildly. The king and some of the principal lords were obliged to seek shelter in a fortified place, while the people held possession of Paris, and wreaked vengeance on the houses of those who were eminently hateful to them. A short time before, the Count of St. Pol had been driven by his subjects to seek a refuge in England, and only just previously to the expedition in which I served had the Duke of Brittany been able to arrange matters with his people. Everywhere a spirit of discontent was rife.

The Crusades had long ago shown the people that, if the lords were necessary to them as leaders, they were not less necessary to the lords as soldiers; and a long course of misgovernment and oppression since that time had made them consider very seriously whether it was in the natural order of things that they who felt a capacity for better work should exist only for the good of their feudal superiors. More than once the question of right had been tried between the two classes, but the higher physical and mental training of the nobles had in each case triumphed over the force of the people. Now, however, in one shape or another, the question was being generally demanded by those who had the spirit and the power to enforce a favourable answer. At least, this had

been so abroad, on the continent of Europe, where disastrous wars had weakened the rulers and emboldened the subjects. In England, where the people had been so much absorbed in the glory which shone round their Plantagenet kings, the arbitrary character of the government had attracted less attention. In the glitter of military pomp, especially when crowned with such successes as Edward I. and III. and the Black Prince had been accustomed to pin to their standards, the people had not cared to remember the despotic violence with which their substance had been taken from them. They were, moreover, prosperous in trade, and could afford to keep pace with the liberal expenses of their princes. Yet even in England, when the splendour of the French and Scotch wars waxed dim by age and the exactions of the government were felt without being gilded, when fiscal iniquities abounded, and even personal liberty was lightly regarded by authority, the commons had been bold to remonstrate, and even to threaten, in cases of over-unscrupulous violence. Magna Charta they made the king ratify no less than fifteen times, and they succeeded in abolishing not a few of the most offensive obligations of the feudal law. A great number of oppressive rules still remained in force—serfdom of villeins, or personal slavery of the weakest class in the state; borough-English, an infamous mode of holding land; the arbitrary seizure of men and money, under shadow of the governmental power—these, and many more, yet remained to gall the people. The merchants and yeomen, who amassed wealth and knew the power of it, exercised their knowledge in wringing from the king many concessions which were undoubtedly of general utility; but they did little towards redressing the wrongs of a specially injured class, who were not participators in the benefits which the commons' representatives had secured. This class was identical with that which had perpetrated the horrors of the Jacquerie and got up the riots in Paris, and it was not slow to be infected by the same spirit—the spirit which, acting in a class above them, had succeeded in wresting privileges from the chary hands of the Counts of Flanders and St. Pol and the Duke of Brittany. We shall see presently how this spirit showed itself in England; suffice it here

to show whence it was imported. Of course the English villeins heard how their brethren abroad had thriven, and eagerly did they look out for an opportunity of putting to their lords similar questions, and, if need so required, in a similar way.

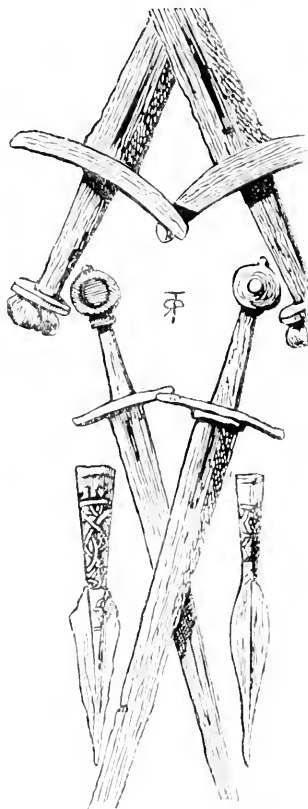
Those who were interested in maintaining the old order of things busily encouraged the exertions of the priests, who worked strenuously to put down the preaching—or, as they called it, the madness—of John Wyclif. The nobles saw that freedom in religion and emancipation of the mind from some of the strongest thralls that could bind it must of necessity tend to freedom in political affairs and delivery of the body from bondage. The priests were concerned for their power; and the nobles, believing their own to be intimately allied with that of the priests, did their utmost to countenance them in retaining it. The lawyers, as interpreters of the law, were, of course, looked upon as inimical to the popular party. Nobles, clergy, and lawyers were clearly arrayed on one side; then came the citizen and yeoman class, who belonged to neither party; and in opposition stood the villeins.

A certain knight of Wiltshire, who seems to have been more of a fool than a knave, having grossly outraged the Holy Sacrament, the blame of his folly was made to rest on Wyclif; and wherever any tendency to show resistance to authority manifested itself, Wyclif bore the blame. No doubt he and his “poor preachers” *had* stirred up the hearts of the people, bidding them be freer and cleaner in their worship than they had been, and it is quite possible that the barons and landowners were right when they calculated that civil and religious liberty must go hand in hand; but it was no more nor less than a wicked slander to say that the reformer inculcated blasphemy, and forbade to give to Cæsar the things which were his.

Going about as I now did among all sorts of people, I heard many things which led me to reflect seriously upon what might happen. From men of the wealthier classes I heard well-founded apprehensions, and from men of a lower grade murmurs and maledictions; and while, my interests being bound up with neither

side, I could afford to obey my conscience in the difference, and walk a middle course, I shuddered at the thought which again and again occurred to me—that the villeins might one day know the power they actually possessed.

Amongst other new acquaintance that I made at this time was Arthur Trewin, apprentice of the law, from whom I learned much that has stood me in stead since, and who proved a true friend to me in times of need.



CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE NEW TEMPLE.

“ There when they came whereas those bricky towers,
The which on Thames’ broad aged back do ride,
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,
There whilome went the Templar knights to bide,
Till they decayed through pride.”

SPENSER.



ON the left side of Fleet Street, as you go from east to west, near Temple Bar, stood the dwelling-place and church of the ancient Knights Templars. The order was one which drew its origin from the Crusades, and was established for the purpose of resisting infidels generally, but specially for the purpose of defending the Holy Sepulchre from the pollution of their presence. The head-quarters of the order were at Jerusalem while the Latin kingdom of that name endured, but branches of it extended all over Christendom. Each country had its House of Templars, under a master, subordinate only to the grand master of the Order. The knights were military monks, serving both as ecclesiastics and soldiers as occasion required, but meddling with nothing outside the affairs of their own order. Their wealth was great, and their power for good or evil enormous. As men-at-arms their reputation was splendid, and, till their great possessions attracted the avarice of the French king Philip the Handsome, their conduct as monks was held to be without reproach.

The united possession of both military and ecclesiastical power, the two greatest which can influence the human race, had the effect of begetting a double pride in them, which proved a misfortune if it was not a sin. Their pride and their riches made

them obnoxious to almost all who were brought in contact with them. The rich were offended by their haughtiness, the poor were insulted by their wealth; and when an occasion came for doing them an injury, the knights fell almost without pity. It was Philip the Handsome who found the occasion, and who never rested till he had so far availed himself of it as utterly to destroy the Order of the Templars. Busybodies and pickthanks, who are ever ready to hand when their services are wanted, soon found out or invented a number of charges against the knights as a body which formed the groundwork of a general attack against them. Horrible reports of their doings in the privacy of their convents were industriously circulated, and what at first were really nothing but mere bruits were afterwards taken for truths. Rumour told how, in the ceremonial of admission to the Order, the novice was compelled to deny the Saviour, to spit upon the cross, to trample upon the crucifix, and that the brethren disbelieved in the sacraments, worshipped a cat, and committed numerous sins and abominations too horrible to mention. The pope appointed commissioners to inquire into the truth of these charges, or rather to ascertain the guilt of the accused; and as their guilt was easily proved to men whose aim it was to find them guilty, great numbers of them were cruelly burned to death, denying with their latest words the wicked accusations made against them. In England less brutality was used upon them, though enough to terrify bold men. The scenes enacted in France were not repeated here: torture sharp and strong racked the frames of many noble men, who were tried by all sorts of affliction short of death; but the malice of their enemies had to rest satisfied, after a two years' attempt to glut itself on the lives of the knights, by a sort of confession of faith which the Templars subscribed. In Spain, Germany, and in all parts where the French king had no influence, the Templars were declared innocent of heresy; but the pope, to back up the authority of his own bulls, and to cover the judicial murders done in France under some sort of legal cloak, affected to believe in the guilt of the Order, and by virtue of a bull abolished it altogether.

King Edward II. seized the property belonging to the knights

in England, and granted parts of it to his friends and to persons from whom he had borrowed money. The Temple in London he gave to Aymer de Valence, the Earl of Pembroke; but Pope Clement V. urging again and again that the property should be given to the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, the king at length yielded to his desire, and in November, 1313, granted all the lands and revenues of the Templars to the Knights of St. John, commanding the barons and others who then held possession of them to give them up. But numerous disputes arose as to rights of ownership, and a great portion of the property remained in the tenants' hands until 1334, when an Act of Parliament was procured, vesting in the Knights of St. John all the property of the late order. Meantime, the gift of the Temple in London to the Earl of Pembroke had been questioned by the Earl of Lancaster, who claimed the place by escheat as lord of the fee. His claim was allowed, and in 1315 he took possession and let out the church and buildings to the students and professors of the common law, who from that time to the present have continued to reside there under a succession of different lords; for in 1322 the Earl of Lancaster was beheaded, and his estates reverted to the crown, by whom this one was re-granted to the Earl of Pembroke. The crown again had it, and granted it to Hugh le Despenser the younger, upon whose attainder for treason, the crown, then worn by Edward III., kept possession on its own account for several years, afterwards, in 1340, granting it to the Knights of St. John, under whom the lawyers now hold it.*

The Temple consisted at this time of two halls, the church, a chapel dedicated to St. Thomas à Becket, a lodging for the Bishop of Ely, a large cloister wherein the brethren had dwelt, thirteen

* The above account as to the "present holding" is Hubert Ellis's, and was true of his time. The Knights of St. John of Jerusalem held the property up to the date of the suppression of monastic institutions by Henry VIII., when the Temple had several succeeding owners; but the crown grants were once more resumed under James I., who granted the Temple to Sir Julius Cæsar and the benchers of the Inns for the purpose of establishing a permanent legal college. The Inner and Middle Temples at this day hold from the crown by payment of a small annual quit rent.

houses used for the purposes of the church, stables, kitchens, and gardens, besides eight shops, whereof seven fronted Fleet Street, and the eighth was in the suburb of London, beyond Temple Bar. Of these tenements the professors and students of the law occupied all but the shops, under a lease from the prior of the hospital; and in a small set of rooms in the cloister behind the church lived my new friend, Arthur Trewin.

He was a native of Cornwall, where his family had been owners of several manors in the neighbourhood of Tintagel since long before the Norman Conquest, and held their heads with the best families dwelling in those parts. Arthur had not come to London with an intention of learning the law to get his living by it, but only in order that he might complete his education, which had been begun in the University at Oxford. There he had been mixed up in the great religious discussions to which the preaching of Wyclif had given rise, and had listened not unwillingly to the teaching of Wyclif himself, and still more to that of his friend and faithful disciple, Repyndon. He had been at Oxford when the papal bull came which exhorted the University to root out the weeds that had sprung up and choked the clean corn; and he had endeavoured to possess his mind, by means of study, with some conviction as to the right course by which to guide himself.

His natural taste, however, led him to study more deeply the works of the great jurists who had written of justice, from the time of Moses to the day of him whom many called the English Justinian (Edward I.). He imbibed from these pure streams a sense of right and wrong which educated the instinct of natural justice in him, and served him many a time when passions surged and wild tumults raged to the silencing of the voice of law, to discriminate between the degrees of offences, and to mete out just measures of punishment, instead of allowing malice to hurry him into taking vengeance. He was a ripe scholar, a man of good speech and gesture, and had a manner about him which generally commanded respect. He was five years my senior in age, and a very father to me in respect of learning, wherein I had been but scantily exercised, having been brought up rather in the company

of men than of books. The instruction I had from good Father Ambrose at Battle formed my whole stock, and that, though slender, was sufficient to make me long for more.

Arthur Trewin was my great and kind friend. As often as the exigencies of business would allow of it, he would bid me come to him at his lodging in the Temple, there to con over the well-used and well-appreciated manuscripts which his purse had enabled him to provide. Besides his own books we had the use of the fine collection which stood in the hutches provided for them in the church, and which contained most of the writings of the ancients in poetry, philosophy, and law. To these, however, we resorted only when Arthur's own stock failed us, or when we desired to verify some matter concerning which we had a doubt, by reference to the best books that had been written on the subjects. Often and often had I sat in his chamber, erewhile the tenement of some military monk, and enjoyed the outpourings of Petrarch's spirit of love, and wondered at the terrible imagination of the Florentine poet Dante, as manifested in the account of his travels through the Inferno; or, as the humour led me, I would read with Arthur's assistance the deathless pages of the great Greek and Roman writers, and sometimes I would listen to my friend when rehearsing his law cases, diving with him into the mysteries of law, and seeking, out of the reports of cases already decided, the glosses or interpretation which were necessary to explain the obscure dicta of the common and statute law.

The rooms he occupied were small, and originally had been scant in comforts, but since Arthur Trewin dwelt in them he had reudered them as snug as possibly could be. There were three rooms allotted to him—a sitting-room, bedchamber, and an oratory—and these he had furnished in a manner suitable to his means. They were situated behind the church on the south side of it, and from the windows, which were large considering the size of the rooms, was a fine view of the Temple Gardens, with the River Thames running in front of them. In the sitting-room were the books that Arthur boasted, suspended in a closed case from the ceiling for fear of the rats. The walls were ornamented with

weapons; instruments of the chase, bits of armour, and hunting trophies, while over the door was fixed a noble stag's head, which Arthur had stricken in fair chase on Exmoor. A piece of tapestry hanging over the doorway divided the sitting-room from the bed-chamber, which was as neatly furnished as such chambers should be; and farther on, next the door leading to the staircase, was what had been the Templar's oratory. Arthur used it for a lumber place, wherein were stowed boxes and rubbish, used crates, and odd lumber. The old porter at the cloister gate used to say, with much crossing of himself and looking very wise, that Master Trewin did well not to inhabit the room, for it was in possession of the spirit of a knight, Roger de Maury, who had lived an unhallowed life, and had been found dead in this very room after having assisted at some of the detestable orgies carried on by the Order in the church. It was of no use to chide the old man for lack of charity, or for cherishing the strange superstition he held to. He firmly believed, like a faithful porter as he was, in the guilt of the Order which his own had displaced; and it required no great stretch of imagination to credit that De Maury—who had been so cruelly tortured by the inquisitors sent to England to establish the crimes of the knights that he died in his room out of sheer exhaustion—had been guilty likewise, and been punished with sudden death, to the eternal disquiet of his soul, as Jenkin Aylmer was wont to aver.

Out of deference to the old man's story we used to call this the ghost's chamber, and did not fail to attribute the noises and scratchings which the too numerous vermin used to make among the boxes and against the time-worn wainscot to the malice or uneasiness of the deceased knight. We never saw, however, the prodigies which Aylmer, who confessed he had not witnessed them himself, declared were to be seen, especially on certain anniversaries, in the neighbourhood of these rooms; thus we never saw the headless knight pacing the terrace which overlooked the garden, and never saw the black cat as high as a horse which at midnight came out of à Becket's chapel to receive the worship of the disembodied votaries, who slunk into holes and crevices in the pave-

ment as soon as the last stroke of twelve had chimed ; above all, we never saw the devil flying out of the window of the oratory on St. John's Eve with the body of De Maury firm in his clutches ; and in spite of the chaplain, who very much desired to exorcise the evil spirit and drive him out of the chamber, Arthur continued to live peacefully in the dead man's rooms. Never being troubled by anything more ghostly than rats, he declined to be so uncivil as formally to turn out any harmless devil who might feel disposed to live in his lumber-room.

The beautiful gardens were a place of constant resort for us, and many a time on summer evenings have I lain on the grass there at my ease, listening to Arthur as he read or spoke of mighty deeds done in the olden time, or unfolded to my greedy ears the story of the peoples who had passed away.

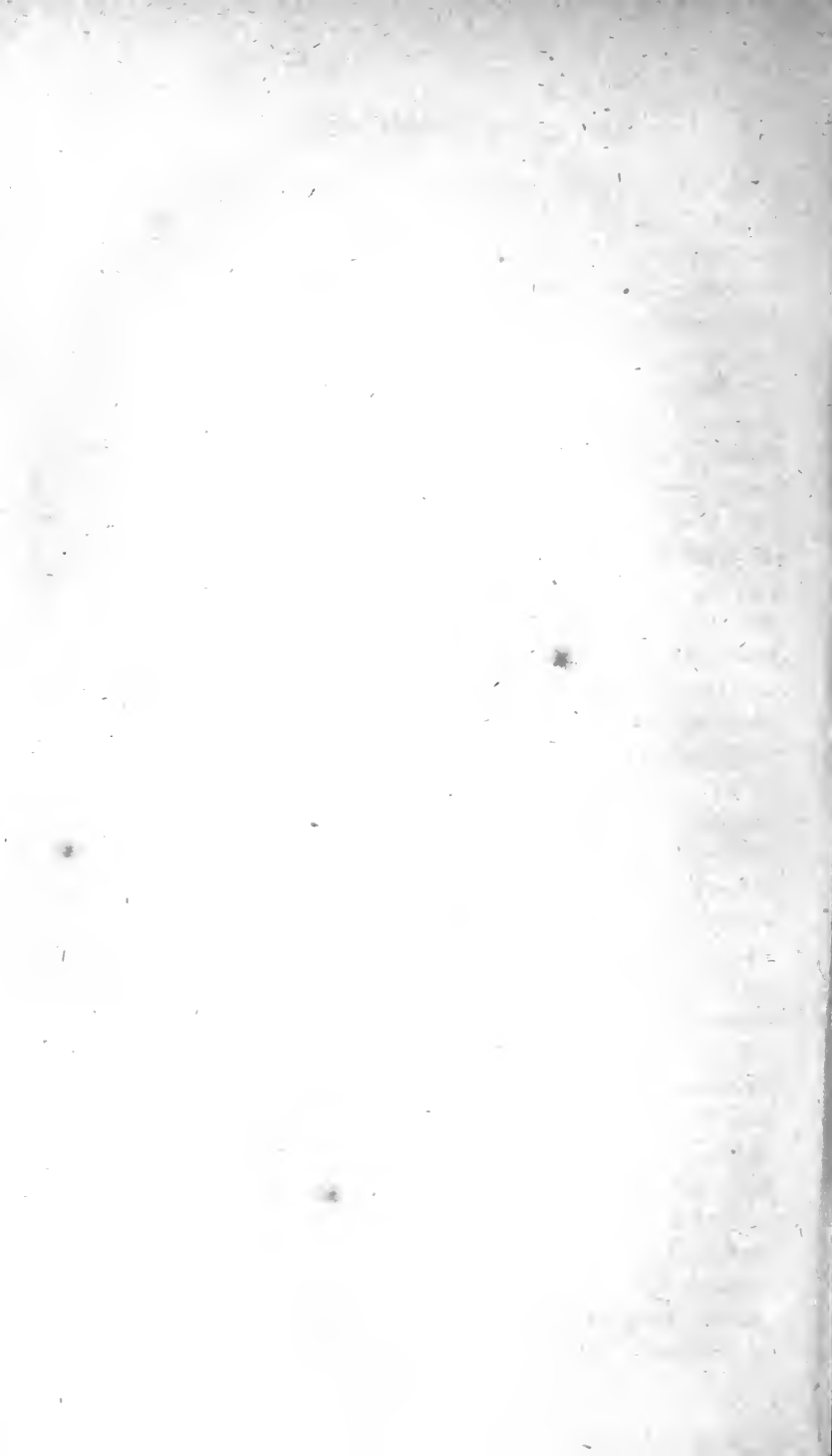
In these gardens I saw for the first time Judges Tresilian and Belknap, who lodged within the precincts, with several other learned serjeants who made a figure more or less considerable in the times of which I shall speak presently. Arthur was well known to my master, and a constant visitor in East Cheap, so that the acquaintance, which had begun by meeting accidentally at the house of a lord of the council with whom Philpot had business, was cemented by the interchange of social amenities, and more strongly still by the frequent communings which were had in Arthur's chamber in the Temple.

One evening, when we had passed several hours in the perusal of Arthur's favourite law-book—the *Institutes* of Justinian, the wise Emperor of Rome—we had gone from his room into the garden, and there feeling restless and in need of exercise, it was proposed that we should call a boat and row up to Chelsea, or else take a turn through the streets of the city for such amusement as might come to hand.

The river looked tempting with the golden sun setting upon it, lighting up the many spires and towers which reared themselves on either bank, from the fane on the archbishop's palace at Lambeth to the pinnacles on the houses of London Bridge. The rich gardens of the noblemen's mansions between the Temple and



A CONVERSATION IN THE TEMPLE GARDENS.



Westminster, studded with flowers and quaint conceits imported from Italy, showed like the pets of Nature, inviting closer acquaintance, the river and they acting as foils to each other, to set off their respective beauties. But the sun was setting, and the glory of evening would soon have faded; darkness would speedily be upon us, and though certainly not afraid, we did not think it worth while for the sake of a short pleasure to run the risk of falling in with some of the more than suspected craft which plied about the Thames o' nights, seeking whom they might run foul of. Lately there had been some bad work done on the river close to Temple stairs — a gentleman belonging to the Bishop of Winchester's household had been found dead in the river, his body gashed in several places, and his pockets rifled of their contents; higher up, a boatful of people coming from Lambeth had been set upon by a couple of light wherries which had watched them on their way, and were only beaten off after a stout resistance, in which several men were slain. The conservator of the Thames had been powerless to prevent these crimes, and it seemed doubtful if he could detect the criminals. Thieves and ruffians of all descriptions received so much aid and sympathy from the lower order of the people, that apprehension of offenders was growing impossible; the sheriff's dared not pursue them into their haunts, and at frequent intervals there were recognised legal sanctuaries. Only a month back two men had slain an esquire in the Abbey of Westminster, and then claimed the protection of the place themselves had violated. The only real security a man had for his life in the capital city was to be found in his own caution or the promptness of his own blows. The government was nearly over-matched by the strong array of lawless characters who defied it, and the ever-increasing dissatisfaction of the villeins rendered it daily more and more difficult to keep the peace.


In view of all this, and partly because Arthur wished to speak with a client who lived in the eastern part of the city, we agreed to take a walk instead of a row; so, locking the outer door of his chamber in the cloister, Arthur walked with me up the pathway by St. Anne's Chapel, and so out of the Temple into Fleet Street.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE FRIAR'S SERMON AT PAUL'S CROSS—A RIOT—THE COMMONS COMPLAIN OF THE CLERGY.

"The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed."

MILTON'S *Lycidas*.

URNING eastward from the great gate of the Temple, we walked past St. Dunstan's Church and Fewtar's Lane to the Fleet bridge, and so up Ludgate to St. Paul's Cathedral. It was about seven o'clock, and the citizens, disengaged from their work, were beginning to fill the streets.

We passed the west end of the cathedral and along the north side, till our passage was stopped by a large crowd of people who stood around Paul's Cross, listening to a man who occupied the pulpit there, and was haranguing them in earnest tones. We had no special object in pushing on, and were, moreover, attracted by the sonorous voice, audible above the noise of the crowd, which was speaking as we came up. We therefore stopped and listened, and wedging ourselves into a position whence we could see all that was going on, prepared to hear what it was that so caught the ear of the multitude. The crowd consisted of men of the well-to-do class of citizens, of women and children, and not a few of the clergy. The speaker was a tall, spare man, with prominent but not harsh features, iron-grey hair, shaven chin, and small, piercing black eyes, which rolled restlessly from point to point in the crowd as he spoke. He was dressed in the habit of the Benedictine friars. He had been speaking for some time before our arrival, and it did not take us long to find that the whole burden

of his theme was the heresy preached and inculcated by the Wyclifites, or Lollards, as he called them.

"I appeal to Christ," said he; "how beautiful was His garden the Church ere these vile weeds and brambles sprang up in it! its trees how fruitful! its plants how delicious! Surely will not God root them out, these noxious tares, which the enemy of mankind has sown while the husbandman slept? Where is now the beauty of the garden? whither is gone the sweet fragrance of the flowers? The tares have grown up and choked it; they have smothered the splendour of the garden, and swallowed up its sweetness. The Church, which was in unity and holy concord, is now split up and maddened by noises. The peace of God, which used to abound in her, is changed for the malice and backslidings of devils. And who are they that have done this? who but the accursed Lollards? Ay, my brethren, these disciples of John Weakbelieve—these are the thorns and briars which have laid waste the Lord's vineyard. But he will undoubtedly destroy them and cast them out.

"There are men among you here who remember the Great Death"—here many of the crowd devoutly crossed themselves as the awful curse which swept Europe in 1349 was mentioned—"that terrible visitation of God which He sent to reprove you because of your pride and many sins, your extravagant garments and your Heaven-offending manners. That Death struck down the strong and beautiful, and tore those in whom you boasted yourselves from you. It was an awful pestilence, but it only touched your bodies.

"What do we now behold? A pestilence greater and more terrible, a thousandfold more terrible, than any that has stricken this disobedient land, infecting more and poisoning deeper than ever did the death-plague of Egypt the Egyptians—a loathsome leprosy, which deigns not to wound the body, but passes through to shrivel up the soul. And this plague now reigns without remedy in England! O thou pestiferous land! thou that wert formerly rife with all wholesome science, free from the stain of heresy, a stranger to all error, unconscious of all fallacy—thou art become the head of all schism, discord, error, and madness.

Thou art the lewd follower of every nefarious sect and of all strange doctrine!

"Woe unto you, ye heretics and schismatics! who throw off your allegiance to God's chosen vicar, and dare to meddle curiously with that which is beyond you. Woe unto you for the damnation you are bringing on yourselves, and alas for the miserable end to which you seduce others! Let the king look to it, for these men are traitors! Let all who have any interest in order look to it, for these men are the stirrers up of strife.

"What!" continued the speaker, changing his tone from the declamatory to the precativè, "do these men say that a sinful priest is no fit person to touch the Holy Sacraments, and do not know that the blessing of Christ was given to the office, not the man? Do they refuse to confess and be absolved by priestly hands, and think that they—vile scum that they are!—are fit to enter unscreened into the presence of God? 'Tis but a cloak under which they may escape confession altogether, and avoid the godly chastisement which Holy Church, for their good, administers.

"And do they not say that the most visibly fit man is he who shall be made head, as though they knew better than the Lord, who hath chosen His own viceregent?

"For the riches of the Church, which she charitably spends for her children, they do but envy them, desiring themselves to possess them, that they may consume them on their lusts.

"What more shall I say," he went on, again taking up the former strain, "O my brethren, for whom my heart is grieved? How shall I speak of those abominable blasphemies which these vile wretches utter continually? I may not tell you what filthy words they spout out against the sacrifice of the blessed Mass. They have the tongues of vipers; they are full of deceit; they are fierce wolves who raven up the sheep. Are they not taught and sent forth by the devil himself, that old hypocrite, that angel of Satan, that forerunner of Antichrist, that damnable heretic not to be named, that perverter of all truth—John Wyclif?"

And here the friar, having worked himself into a mighty pas-

sion, ceased for a time from the gesticulations and grimaces which had accompanied his words, and paused for lack of spleen.

Now and then, as an extraordinarily brutal invective flew out of his mouth, I saw signs of disapprobation shown openly among the crowd, and though the last mouthful of foul names with which he had ended quite stunned the people for the nonce, they were evidently determined to have no more of it. There were many in the throng who knew Master Wyclif, and knew he was not at all that the friar declared of him, and there were many more who, though they did not know how far he merited the epithets poured upon him, were convinced that they had heard him speak most comfortable words to them, which he drew, as he told them, out of the Bible itself, and that he had taught them nothing but what was fair and honest. They would not, therefore, hear him thus scandalously abused. The friar was a bold man to speak such words to the men who on two occasions had gone to see that no harm came to Wyclif. As he presented himself again to speak, loud murmurs arose from the body of the crowd.

"Speak in charity, Master Monk!" "Away with the Jack priest!" "Put him to the pump!" "Shame on thee! shame!"

These cries, soon followed by others more excited and angry, reached the friar's ears. In vain he signed to the people to be silent, in vain he roared out maledictions upon them till he was hoarse—the people would not hear him. They had heard enough—too much, perhaps, for his safety—and the question seemed simply to be how far he should be punished for what he had already said. There was certainly an intention to give him a lesson in manners, and teach him the prudence of keeping a civil tongue in his head. The crowd surged round the pulpit, swaying to and fro—a great human wave—while the partisans of the friar, and they were not a few, though greatly outnumbered by the supporters of Wyclif, had already exchanged blows with their opponents. Clubs flew out, and in some cases swords, but the throng was too dense to allow of the use of them: until a space had been cleared, little harm could be done.

The monk, who certainly was not wanting in courage, showed

no sign of fear as he beheld the raging of the people. He had done what he felt to be his duty in speaking as he had spoken, and this conviction gave him moral strength which did not fail him at the mere sight of numbers; but moral courage could not save his skin whole if the people took the idea into their heads to make a set at him.

Arthur Trewin saw at a glance the danger and the means to avert it. Bidding me follow him, if possible, through the crowd, and elbowing his way in that dense mass, he reached the foot of the pulpit steps. Clambering up the steps into the leaden pulpit, and telling the monk to crouch down—an order he was not sorry to obey, on account of the flight of missiles which were now being flung at him from below—Arthur sprang into the fencing at the front, and began to address the people.

His appearance produced a temporary lull in the storm. Although unknown to the majority of the crowd, he commanded their attention sufficiently long to warn them against the riot they were now making, and to exhort them, in the king's name, and as they valued order, to suffer the monk to depart in peace.

While he was speaking, I motioned to those immediately about us whom I fancied were friendly to the monk, and drew them in a compact ring round the foot of the pulpit. The ground between it and the dean's house was tolerably free from people, and we purposed to get the monk down the steps and guard him with our bodies to the door of the deanery.

It required no little pushing and driving on the part of the monk's defenders to effect their object. The crowds did not altogether like being baulked of what they looked upon as amusement for themselves as well as correction for the Benedictine, and it was only by dint of extraordinary exertion that a way was cleared for the passage of the preacher.

Unluckily for them there were several friars among the crowd, who had to bear the burden for their brother. At first a little idle banter was passed upon them by some wags of apprentices, who made original remarks upon their costume and appearance, which elicited the laughter of the mob and proportionately

irritated the clergy. From words the people got to more personal annoyance, and—intending all the while to do no more than amuse themselves at the expense of the friars—began to throw mud and to jostle the good men, whom they irreverently styled “bald-pates.”

There was one who wore for a protection to his head a small velvet cap in addition to his cowl. He was an oldish man, and so far from giving cause of offence to any one, had stood by during the whole of the sermon and its consequent, a quiet observer of the proceedings. An urchin of an apprentice, with more nimbleness than respect in his composition, having got behind this old man, stood on tiptoe and whisked the little cap from his head, flinging it high into the air, with an invitation to the owner to run and put himself under it, so as to catch it on his head as it came down.

Clapping his hand to his head, as if to make sure he had not lost part of it, the old man turned round upon his assailant and caught him a fine box o’ the ear with his other hand, which brought the warm blood into the lad’s cheeks. The cap was caught by some one in the crowd and again tossed up, amid the merriment of the thoughtless and the mischief-loving; but the lad who had commenced these proceedings redoubled his attack, assisted by several lusty youths, so that the priest would have had a bad time of it had not interference been made in his behalf.

A stout tall man, who had been standing near the pulpit, and had been one of the first to cry “Shame!” at the language uttered by the preacher, witnessed this attack upon the quiet old man, and had merely laughed a hearty laugh of satisfaction when he saw the boy get so well-merited a clout o’ the ear, and then turned away to look after the retreating preacher, when his attention was again drawn to the scuffle that was going on.

“Now then, young Mischief, hands off there, or I’ll fetch them off!” he sang out, as a youth caught hold of the priest’s arms from behind, and called to his comrades to “give it him in front.”

“Hold your noise, Master Serving-man! Come when you’re called!” was the rash reply vouchsafed to his warning, a reply to which a rejoinder came in the shape of such a tingling application

about the hinder quarters of the speaker as made him loose his hold upon the priest's arms, and make himself a temporary seat of his hands.

"Oh, you brute, you!" exclaimed the stern-stricken youth, not yet decided whether to cry or to fight, and contenting himself meantime with abuse.

"Nay," said the stranger, "I've more of the same sort of dressing if you *will* have it. You'd best keep a civil tongue in your mouth."

And this opinion seemed to coincide with that arrived at by the other lads, who had witnessed the discomfiture of their comrade, and thought it best to make their presence scarcer.

The boy with tingling hind quarters seemed disposed to follow their example, only the stranger insisted on his finding the priest's little cap, under penalties which would be instantly enforced. With some difficulty the cap was found, and then, after unwelcome admonition to be more careful in future how he ventured cowardly to assault an old man and a priest, the lad was authorised by the stranger to clear out of the crowd.

I had heard the voice of one I thought I knew, speaking in tones that were heard above the crowd—now speaking temperately, now giving the rough side of his tongue to those who were proof against moderation. The twilight of an evening late in May prevented my recognising the features, but the voice was quite familiar to me. It was the voice of the man who had interfered in behalf of the old priest; and when this man came to help in getting the preacher safely into the dean's house, I saw at once that he was no other than honest Will Archdale, from Battle Abbey.

We recognised each other at the same time, and setting to work with the confidence of old fellow-labourers, soon effected the object in view. Before Arthur had finished speaking, but just as the people were getting impatient of him, the monk was lodged safely in the dean's house, having learned a lesson by which he was likely to profit without it having caused any great scandal to the city of London.

Night had now set in. The people began to disperse to their homes, and Arthur, Archdale, and myself turned off into Guthron's Lane, in West Cheap,* and went to talk over the events of the evening in the comfortable parlour of the Flower de Luce.

The Flower de Luce was an ancient hostelry much frequented by the citizens of small means. They met here to discuss the leading topics of the day, to transact business, and to interchange ideas upon whatever was of interest. This evening there was an unusually large gathering, and among those assembled were a few of a lower class than were wont to resort thither, and several countrymen.

We took our cups of wine to a settle at the far end of the room, and hoping to be out of the noise and hubbub in the outer apartment, sat down and talked over old times. Hamo de Offyngton was dead, and Father Ambrose was the new prior under Walter de Buissey, who had been chosen abbot. But times were altered, Archdale said. The new abbot was not of old Hamo's mould, lacked the authority which *his* predecessor had wielded almost without exertion, and recked not how matters fared on the coast so Battle Abbey was free from annoyance. He had shorn the abbey of much of the magnificence which Hamo de Offyngton had loved to show: the farm was curtailed, many of the old servants were discharged, the falcons were sold, the expenses as much as possible reduced, and the hospitality which the rules of all abbeys required to be shown to strangers was no longer of the generous sort that used to prevail. Archdale himself had been dismissed from the place which for his part he was unwilling to serve under the new order of things, and he was now in London in search of employment.

Our conversation was interrupted when it had proceeded thus far by the angry voices of several who were at issue upon some topic the company had been discussing.

It seems that the event of the evening — the sermon at Paul's Cross — had been talked of, and various opinions expressed, some

* "Guthron's Lane, in West Cheap," is now called Gutter Lane, Cheapside.

being found so hardy, in the face of a large majority against them, to speak in favour of the friars.

"Men can see by their appearance," said an Essexman, who looked like a farmer, "that they are given to great penance, and that their diet is simple and spare. For forty years have I lived, and I never saw men fatter about the kidneys than these friars."

"True enough," added another; "when they wander about the country they get so thin by want of meat, and are so reduced by penance, that each one is a horse-load when he will truss out of town."

A loud roar of laughter followed this sally at the expense of several sombre-looking men who had been advocating the cause of the slandered monks, and the talk was still carried on against them.

"They be very catchpennies," cried one; "they sell their Saviour for less than Judas did, and will absolve the greatest sinner from his sins for less than the price of a pair of shoes."

"I was a friar myself full many a day, and know well the truth of them," observed another, a dissipated, sinister-looking man, whose looks did not bespeak the good opinion of his hearers.

"A renegade belike!" cried a decent-looking man who had before spoken on the side of the monks—a speech which nearly involved him in an immediate broil, and would have done so had not the man spoken to managed to secure the laugh on his own side by saying, in as insolent a tone as he could,

"Renegade, yes! Who would not be from a society of which the devil was abbot? A man needs a long spoon who will sup with him, I trow!"

"That's true indeed," chimed in the Essexman; "but what think ye I heard one of the fraternity say the other day from a pulpit into which he had stolen to supplant a better man? 'St. Peter,' said he, 'had the keys of heaven and hell, and when he died he left them to his successors in the Holy See, that they might bind and loose as he had power to do.' And thereto Master Friar exhorted us to gain the pope's goodwill by free alms to aid him in getting into his seat at Rome, from which I wis he is fast shut

out. I trow Peter never sold sins for money, nor had so little wisdom as to leave his keys to a man like that who now calls himself pope."

This accumulation of injuries upon the order to which they were sincerely attached roused the honest anger of those who had defended the friars, and as this last speech, directed at him whom they believed to be Christ's viceregent and the infallible guide of man, left the yeoman's lips, a motion was made towards the place where he stood, and it seemed that the fight which had begun outside was to be fought out in the parlour of the Flower de Luce.

Angry words and some blows were exchanged; threats were uttered, closely followed by the drawing of weapons and preparations for carrying the menaces into execution, when, fortunately for all concerned, the city guard happened to pass down the lane, and, hearing the disturbance, came in and prevented bloodshed, the would-be combatants separating with many expressions of mutual ill-will and desires to have an opportunity of meeting again.

Arthur now returned to his lodging in the Temple, and Archdale, glad enough to find his old acquaintance, and hopeful of getting employment under Master Philpot, to whom he was already known, through the scrape at the king's coronation, accepted my offer to accompany him to my master's house in East Cheap, where he found good lodging and hearty welcome.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

OLD PHILIP AUBERT—ARTHUR TREWIN RIDES WITH ME FROM
SHEEN.

“Methinks I hear, methinks I see
Ghosts, goblins, fiends; my phantasie
Presents a thousand ugly shapes.”

BURTON'S *Anatomy of Melancholy*.



WILL ALLEIN, whose hurts received in the campaign of Brittany had laid him by for a long while, had since some time been able to be again about. He was now my constant companion, with Arthur Trewin and honest Oswald. The latter, however, living out of our house, and having, moreover, much to look after in his father's business, was seldom with us. Always the same good-hearted, even-tempered fellow he had ever been, he was a general favourite, and we were glad, as are always those who have a really good fellow in their company, when Oswald Barnes was with us.

Archdale was, of course, frequently absent on the duty which he did, as he did everything he put his hand to, well, easily winning the approval and confidence of Master Philpot, who declared that he could not be better served. Old Margaret, whose age warranted the licence of her tongue, used often to cry out upon the peculiarity which she had noticed in Will the first night he spent in London, professing her entire faith in him as “a valiant trencher-man,” but not concealing her belief in the axiom she had chosen to establish, that a man who was so good at the board could be good for little else beside.

With poor Philip Aubert, who had never been able to go to sea again after the slashing he got in the affair with John Mercer, and

who was now installed as butler in Master Philpot's house, Archdale was a great favourite. Philip loved dearly, after supper was over, to talk and hear about the times which had gone by, and in Archdale he found not only an entertaining story-teller, but, what was still more precious in his sight, a most patient story-listener. If Will had told the story how Hamo de Offyngton beat the French away from Winchelsea once, he had told it certainly fifty times, at the old seaman's request. Philip never tired of it, and, as Archdale came to each well-known point in the story—describing how the abbot was dressed, the array of his forces—telling what the French knight said to the abbot, and what reply the abbot made to the French knight, and how the French admiral threw the great stones from his engine in the ship, but finally went away—Philip would chuckle with fresh enjoyment, as though he were hearing it for the first time, clapping his can on to the table with exclamations, each fitted to the special point to which he applied it—"That's right!" "Bravo, Master Priest!" "The French bantam!" winding up with an epitome which never varied, containing his own private opinion upon the capabilities of Frenchmen or any else who chanced to be born out of the English island. Then he would retail, not without irksome iteration, the many stories of events in which he had had part, whereof not a few bordered upon the marvellous, having acquired substance through oft repeating. But Archdale listened with good-natured patience to them all, never contradicting or pointing out the old man's contradictions of himself, but gladdening poor Philip's heart by quiet endurance of his twice-told tales.

Peter Wall was still gardener, having also, to compensate him for the loss of the butler's office, the chief direction of the stables. Carrow, who ran away, as I have mentioned, rather than be taken with her master by the men-at-arms at Troyes, had on that occasion got safely back to the English camp, and her appearance it was, riderless and frightened, which had warranted the conclusion of Sir Hugh Calverley that I was lost. She had been duly cared for by a soldier in our company, and kept for the captain's use as a handsome charger; so that when Sir Hugh met me, whom he

thought dead, alive and well in the city of London, he lost no time in giving me back my mare, which he knew I prized for other reasons than that she was a pretty piece of horseflesh. She was none the worse for her campaigning, although Peter affected to see some blemish in her, merely in order that he might have an opportunity of attributing it to French forage, for, like Philip Aubert, he had a supreme contempt for everything that was not English. Under his care she thrived and outlived the effect of French food, serving me faithfully as in past days, and carrying me on all my journeys like a beautiful mare as she was.

Alice, now a charming maiden of seventeen, continued to hold gentle sway over the affections of all about her. Over mine she had complete dominion, and I strove daily to prove myself worthy of her love by acting as much as I could in the way that became her lover. Nothing was ever said about the bond which there evidently was between us. I suppose we took it for granted, and Master Philpot, if he observed it, neither encouraged nor forbade it. He was, I now think, not unwilling to see the growth of an abiding affection between his own and his adopted child. We passed our days in the enjoyment of each other's society, without, perhaps, knowing how necessary that society was becoming to both of us.

Master Philpot was declining in the vale of years, and his many cares of business, public and private, oppressed him to such an extent that he needed all the attention and support which kindness could bestow. Alice was his chief comfort; in her centred all the interest he had in living; and while he laboured in all things to promote her happiness, she returned no less a measure of dutiful affection.

For public affairs, they lumbered on as well as might be, considering who had them in charge—a council creating awe and fear in the minds of all good citizens, and utterly unable, as the sequel will show, to make proper head against the unruly. Simon de Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, was chancellor—one who loved not the commons, good churchman though he might be. Two years ago he had intrigued out of his office Sir Richard Le

Scrope, a man loved by the people, and a most loyal servant of the crown, and since his accession to power things had gone wrong. Whether the instincts of his Norman blood, or a contempt for the lowly, gained during his long residence in Rome and the foreign universities, caused him to do it, I know not, but he shut his eyes to the dangers which were springing up all around him, and persisted in his disbelief of the peril till it actually swallowed him up. He it was who invented the "new and strange subsidy" of the poll-tax, on the levying of which followed so great grudging and many a bitter curse, and, more terrible still, the great rebellion.

The Bishop of Exeter, who had held the office of lord treasurer until last Christmas, was succeeded in the early part of the year (1381) by Sir Robert Hales, Prior of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England. Sir Robert, though beyond all question a valiant knight and an honest gentleman, was no more to the mind of the people than my lord chancellor. Perhaps he imported his military notions of discipline, and the absoluteness of his monastic rule, too much into the administration of public affairs. From some cause or other, he was profoundly disliked by the people, for whom, in return, he had no abundant love.

Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, was the king's tutor and guardian, appointed by the Parliament in London in 1379. The Duke of Lancaster was nominally regent of the kingdom, though he busied himself more in his enterprise for the crown of Castile than in English affairs, partly because he liked not those who were about the king, and partly because, as it was alleged, though falsely, he bided his opportunity to seize the English crown for himself.

Lord Thomas of Woodstock, the duke's younger brother, was also at the court, planning for his own gain, and not minding the welfare of the country. Sir Michael de la Pole, Sir Robert Tresilian, Sir Nicholas Brembre, and others of a like stamp, with the ministers above enumerated, served as a kind of hedge between the king and his people, so that he could neither know nor learn to remedy their wrongs.

Fortunately for England, there were good men and true yet alive and ready to serve, dwelling though they were in the cold shade of royal disfavour—men who, when the great tempest overtook the ship of the state, boldly took the helm, and steered her through the shoals which threatened to wreck her, content even to sacrifice themselves, as Sir Simon Burley did, on behalf of the common weal. Such was the state of things at the end of May in the year of grace 1381.

On a fine evening in the latter part of this month—the exact day has escaped my memory—I was returning from Sheen to London, after despatching some business on which Master Philpot had sent me to one of the king's officers there. Arthur Trewin had accompanied me for the ride's sake, as he often did; and now, it being near sunset, we had reached the high hill in the manor of Kensington which looks down upon London. Our talk had been of many things. We had built up for the twentieth time those airy castles in which our imaginations were wont to dwell. Arthur had been duly intrusted with the Great Seal of England, and I was a second Sir Peter de la Mare, maintaining, as Speaker of the Commons' House, the rights of the people against kingly aggression. Both of us had swept our public paths clear of all abuses; we were thoroughgoing reformers, in our ignorance of what wanted reform; everybody was contented and happy under our dominion; the lords all did their duty, and the commons did theirs; John Wyclif was Archbishop of Canterbury, and, through our management, on good terms with the pope; the French were on good terms with us; the Scots extended the hand of fellowship; and we had even got on so far in our beneficent course as to have discussed a plan for treating the Irish other than as wild beasts, when we arrived at the summit of the hill in Kensington Manor. The sun was sinking behind us, flooding the heavens with a golden sea of glory; the thick forest from which we here emerged stood out in sombre distinctness against the sky, and before us lay the cities of London and Westminster, affectionately embraced by the winding folds of the Thames, while the murky night clouds gathering in the east served as an effective background to the rest

of the picture. Our attention was drawn to the beauty of the scene, and we reined in our horses to look and admire.

"How peaceful and quiet everything lies!" said Arthur, pointing towards the cities. "Why cannot men afford to live in the enjoyment of such rest, instead of rushing into arms, and making Nature frightened with their quarrels?"

"What about the lawyers?" I said, smiling; "they are in the same condemnation, I suppose?"

"Not so," answered he; "they strive to keep the order which rude men break. They are the interpreters of the law to those who are governed by it."

"So that if the law be oppressive they must needs be oppressors," I replied.

"Well, yes, I suppose so," said he; "but then they do not make the laws, and cannot be made responsible for them. If the law is oppressive, it should be altered."

"But who is to alter it?" I inquired.

"The Parliament, of course," replied Arthur.

"And if it be the interest of those in the Parliament to retain the oppressive laws? for you know well enough that the poorer folk have few representatives in it, while hundreds of them do not know of the existence of such a thing as representation. What is to be done then?"

"The poorer folk must submit till their opportunity comes, I suppose," said Arthur; "meantime they must try to better their condition."

"That's all well enough in theory, Arthur," I said, "but the poor people are not so well informed as you are in the right and wrong of things. They know little beyond the fact that they are intolerably oppressed by their masters, and that when they appeal to the law they are told it is against them. Their masters they hate because of their tyranny, and the lawyers they hate because they read the laws against them. Their narrow scope of reason shows them only one way in which they can hope for redress—by appeal to force. God forbid they should resort to it here in England! but things grow daily worse and worse, and those who

are interested in keeping peace are obstinate in their adherence to the old oppressive ways. The laws are unjust, Arthur, as you have many times allowed. They must be mended sooner or later, and if those who should mend them will not do so, depend upon it mischief will arise."

"A bold reformer indeed!" said Arthur, surprised at the vehemence with which I had spoken. "I go with you some part of your way, but stop short at the violence. Nothing can justify civil strife."

"Spoken like a lawyer!" I said. "And I too would like to stop short there, but, if there be no other way, I only say you must not over-blame the people if they take to it. I hope I shall ever be on the side of order as well as of liberty, but I cannot help censuring those who, knowing better, give occasion for outbreaks, more than those who, being ignorant, are the promoters of the strife."

"I pray we may never have occasion to discriminate between them," said Arthur.

"Amen, with all my heart!" I answered, "for we cannot forget the examples given by the French at their *Jacquerie* in the late King Edward's reign, of how much the people dare when they are unleashed against their wrongers. Fancy that *Jacquerie* here, Arthur, at work amongst those most dear to us, in blind rage destroying the good and evil together, marring the beauty of that peaceful scene yonder, where all is calm and perfectly passionless. Murder and outrage rampant under that pure sky! The very thought is horrifying."

"And yet under certain circumstances you would excuse even that?" said Arthur.

"No, indeed I would not, Arthur," I replied; "not excuse, but not be surprised at it."

"It will be the worst day's work they will have done for a long time, if the people play any *Jacquerie* pranks here," observed Arthur.

"Numbers may tell," I said.

"Not against discipline," rejoined Arthur. "No, Hubert, we

are not yet quite in the pass to which the French were brought when their king was a prisoner and the power of the kingdom broken. King Richard's government is a bad one, but strong enough not to succumb to mob violence."

"I hope so," I said, "and hope further that if there should be a rising, the people will not be pushed down again under their old wrongs as well as be summarily punished."

"Well, let us hope there will not be any occasion to discuss the question," said Arthur; "but if we do not move on, friend Hubert, we shall be benighted on this road, which, to tell you the truth, I have not the least mind to, considering how unsafe the roads have been of late."

The sun had already set. In accordance with Arthur's suggestion, we pushed briskly on, just loosening our swords in their scabbards, so as to prevent being taken unprepared if surprised by robbers, and rode at a smart trot in the direction of London.

Leaving Arthur at the Temple gate, I went on to East Cheap, where I found Archdale lately returned from Brentwood with a tale which set all London by the ears.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THOMAS DE BAMPTON'S MISSION TO ESSEX—ARCHDALE'S ESCAPE.

"The surest way to prevent Seditions (if the times do bear it) is to take away the matter of them; for if there be fuel prepared it is hard to tell whence the Spark shall come that shall set it on fire."—LORD BACON.



WILL ARCHDALE'S story was this. Thomas de Bampton had been sent down into Essex by the king, to inquire into the reasonableness of the charges preferred against the collectors of the poll-tax. Those who farmed the tax had, no doubt, abused their authority, and grievously amerced the people. It was Thomas's duty to see who had been wrongly dealt with, and at the same time to levy the tax on those who had through interest or fraud had got off without paying anything. He fixed his quarters at Brentwood, and there opened his commission.

Now the double functions which Thomas had to discharge were, if rightly done, nothing more than the means of justice; and, as far as I could make out, he purposed to do his work well and without partiality. But the people got the idea into their heads that he came there for the sole object of getting more money out of them; and, smarting sorely under the late exactions of the tax-farmers, a number of them from Fobbing went to Thomas de Bampton, and told him they would not pay one penny more than they had paid, and they showed him the quittances the collectors had given them.

Thomas felt the dignity of his office insulted, and being a choleric man threatened the Fobbing men with all the terrors of the law, which he was ready to enforce through the means of two royal sergeants-at-arms who were with him. This did not allay the

indignation of his hearers, who retired to consult with their fellows what should be done; and the result was that the chief men of Fobbing, Curringham, and Samford assembled to the number of a hundred, and presented themselves at Brentwood. There they saw the king's commissioner, and in reply to his question, "What did they want?" gave him a flat answer to the effect that they would neither treat with him at all nor pay any more money.

Archdale, who was present, told me that the scene was altogether marvellous. There was on the one side the commissioner, surrounded by his attendants, the sergeants-at-arms, the clerks and deposition-makers, armed with the majesty of that unseen authority which had not been questioned since the Conquest; and on the other stood the rough, untutored creatures whose forefathers had been villeins since the same period, but who had many of them fought under the banners of the late king and his valiant son, and there learned how necessary they were to their masters, even if their masters were not necessary to them. This knowledge emboldened some of them not to submit tamely to wrong; and those who did not possess the knowledge were inspired by that spirit which makes even the wretched dare. They confronted the assessor like men who are resolute. And he — for he was a courageous gentleman — he, too, was resolute. He could neither brook the insolence of their speech nor the gathering of themselves together against his lawful authority.

"What is it you would have, good people?" asked De Bampton. "Tell me, that I may understand you."

"We want our rights," said a mason of Fobbing.

"Has any man deprived you of them?" asked the commissioner.

"Yes, yes!" cried several voices.

"Who is he that has done so?" was the query.

"The tax-farmers have, and you have, and we won't have any more of it," said the mason.

"Ay! that's what we've come to tell you," said another.

"We want liberty like the Flemings!" cried a third.

"Liberty, my friends," said Thomas de Bampton, addressing them, "is the right to live and be governed by the law."

"Well, that's what we want—that's what we want," cried the men. "We're not governed according to law. The law doesn't say we're to pay taxes twice over, nor to be beaten, nor put in prison for nothing at all! We've come for our rights, and we'll have them."

"You *shall* have your rights, my good people," said De Bampton, "but not by threats."

"We'll have them somehow, depend on that, Master Lawyer, or there are those shall groan for it," said the mason of Fobbing.

"I have promised you shall have them," said De Bampton. "Now go; I have business of the king's to do, which you delay."

"We won't go till we have our rights," said several men, doggedly.

"I have told you you shall have them," said De Bampton, growing angry.

"Put it in writing on a skin, so that the priest can read it to us," cried some, "we'll not go else." And it certainly did look, so Archdale said, as if the people had not the least intention to go away, nor to allow the king's business to be done.

"I have listened patiently to what you have told me, men," said De Bampton, "and I have given you a fair answer. I have told you to go from hence, and you take no heed. I now order you to depart instantly."

Some of the deputation seemed inclined to obey, but the majority restrained them, and the mason of Fobbing again declared that they would not go till they had a parchment promise of their rights; "Neither will we, for you or any other," he added, "pay any more taxes."

"Arrest that man!" shouted De Bampton, as the last sentence of the bold spokesman fell upon his ear.

The sergeants-at-arms rose to obey, and, followed by their subordinates, proceeded to lay hands upon the foremost of the Essexmen.

"Hands off, Master Sergeant!" cried one of them, a big, burly fellow, whose bare arms showed the great knots of muscle standing out in relief upon them—"I would not do thee a

hurt." And for a moment the man stopped in the execution of his office.

The others stood still a few moments, like men irresolute, hesitating to break through the barrier which had served for three hundred years to keep them back. The force of habit restrained them; they doubted how far they could defy the power above them. But there was another force within them which had carried them to the door of sedition, and which had strength to carry them through it. Their hesitation was not long-lived; for when the sergeants, encouraged by the inactivity of the men, proceeded further to arrest them, a loud shout of "Down with the tax-men! down with the robbers of the poor!" resounded through the hall of the manor-house where De Bampton sat, and in an instant all was confusion.

Poor Whittier, the sergeant who had laid hands on the smith, measured his length along the ground; and his colleagues, witnessing his fate, discreetly forbore to merit a like one, but showed their wisdom by flight.

Thomas de Bampton, almost beside himself with rage, but not so blinded that he could not see the futility of opposing weakness to excessive strength, remained where he was, a silent but not unmoved spectator. He disdained to fly before a rabble, and his strong personal courage saved him, by the awe which it inspired, from the popular violence. The inferior persons of his retinue met, however, with scant favour. Hustled and beaten, they betook themselves to any available covert, happy to escape with their lives.

Archdale, and one or two more who stood firm with De Bampton, ran a close chance of coming to harm; for when the uproar in the hall had somewhat abated, and the deputies, satisfied with having put an end to the levies session, were about to retire, a number of the townsfolk, excited by what they had heard of the proceedings, rushed into the place, and recommenced the riot with fresh energy. Benches were broken up, the hangings were torn down and rent, the tables were overturned, the papers destroyed, and, for lack of objects on which to vent their wrath, the rioters

were beginning to fall upon each other, when the sight of Thomas de Bampton and his few friends at the upper end of the hall attracted their attention.

Those who had respected the courage and person of the king's servant were now powerless, if willing, to prevent mischief. The new-comers were men of a different stamp—ignorant, for the most part, why they were in revolt, and utterly unaffected by any of the principles which guide men who are fighting for a cause.

De Bampton was standing close by the door with his back towards it, Archdale and the others on either side of him. It seems he thought it now high time to provide for his safety, and had turned round to make his exit through the door, when the mob rushed to the spot where he was, yelling at the top of their voices, "Death to the arch-traitor! Down with the chief robber!" And pressing one upon the other, they surged forward in wild disorder.

The moment was a critical one. Something it behoved the attacked to do, and that instantly. Before the foremost men reached the place where De Bampton stood, the swords of the little party flew out of their scabbards, glittering with cruel brightness in the Whitsuntide sun. Archdale and the three others who remained with De Bampton sprang together in front of him, and, bidding him withdraw while they made good his retreat, Archdale shouted to the rioters to beware, and swore to kill the first man who advanced.

Every minute was of importance to De Bampton, and the check which the determined conduct of his friends gave to his enemies stood him in good stead. While the latter were hesitating whether to try the keenness of Archdale's sword, and making up their minds that they did not at all like the expression worn upon his face, the commissioner had gained the stables, and there finding three or four of his people, half dead with fright, with their assistance got quickly away, and before his friends or foes could tell of his whereabouts was galloping swiftly towards London.

The position of Archdale and his friends in the hall was scarcely a pleasant one.

Two hundred or more of enraged peasants, bent on mischief, pitted against four men! Certainly the four were armed, but a rush and a dash would have overthrown them had the mob only had sense to try. Fortunately for our friends, they had not, and Archdale and his companions backed gradually to the door, keeping their eyes and hands steadily at watch for the coming of the foe who came not. Threats and curses there were in plenty, but, as Will Archdale said, these broke no bones; and as long as the utterers did not come to blows, they were at liberty to express their opinions in whatever language they thought fit.

Notwithstanding this narrow escape from the hall, the danger had not yet passed. As our friends, mounted on the best steeds they could find, issued from the stable-yard, they were recognised by a crowd of rioters who had just left ransacking the house.

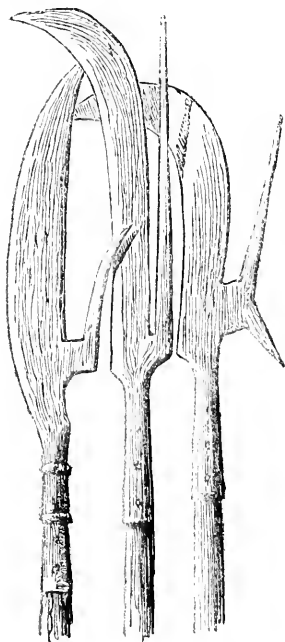
"Have at them! Pull them off! Head them!" yelled the wretches, and ran forward in a body to wreak their vengeance on the horsemen.

Out whipped the swords again, and this time not for nothing. Archdale and another in front, the other two close behind them, and all four armed and angry.

"Charge them, gentlemen!" cried Will, spurring his horse; and quick to the word, the little party bounded forward right among the people who had blocked up the London road. Away the people tumbled to right and left as they felt the rush of the horses through the air close on to them. Many lay sprawling in the mire, knocked over by their comrades in their hurry to avoid the charge; but one fellow, unluckily for him, happened to remain on his feet within reach of Archdale's arm. The man had a flail in his hands, which he had brought from the barn where he had been threshing, and he was now preparing to use it, as the horsemen passed, upon the skull of at least one of them. Which of them he designed to favour did not appear, but before he could bestow his gift Archdale came abreast of him, and slashing him across the neck with a deeply-biting cut, had the satisfaction of seeing him fall to the ground.

A howl of execration rose from the crowd, a third time baffled

in their pursuit after mischief. But our friends did not stay to listen. Clapping spurs to their horses, and aided by the diversion which Archdale's blow had made, they drew swiftly away, and rode in all haste to London.



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SIR SIMON BURLEY CLAIMS ROBERT DELL AS HIS VILLEIN—
AND JOHN THE TILER OF DARTFORD RESENTS AN INSULT TO
HIS DAUGHTER.

“Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not
Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow?”

BYRON.



THE events narrated in the last chapter were the beginning of the troubles, and the beginning only. What consternation did they not cause throughout the city, in the king's palace, and in the courts of law! How surely it was felt that this riot was not a mere outburst of passion, just a local disturbance, but a sign of the deep feeling which was known to be in the hearts of the inferior orders throughout the southern part of the kingdom! The citizens conferred in common council, and Master Philpot's wisdom made him suggest concessions ere they were taken. Some were for the severe repression of the feeling; some sympathised; all resolved that order must be maintained. The king's council debated, but would not recognise the existence

of popular rights. Orders were given, not only for the severe punishment of future offenders, but for the arrest and trial of the late rioters. The course was dignified, and perhaps strictly just, but a little dangerous, as Sir Robert Belknap found it.

Sir Robert was Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and to him was given a commission, called of Traylibaston, by virtue of which he was empowered to go into the district where the disturbances had taken place, and specially to try the rioters, a number of whom had been arrested.

It does not seem to have occurred to the council that the people would dare to set at defiance the king's authority, as represented by the chief justice. So much had that been accustomed to be obeyed that they would not entertain the notion that resistance was possible. Sir Robert Belknap set out with his apparitors, clerks, scriveners, and sergeants, but with few armed attendants, and those more intended for show than use; and the result was disastrous in the extreme.

Sir Robert held his session in the disturbed district, and summoned the grand jury to pronounce yes or no upon the indictments which were preferred against the prisoners. Everything was done regularly and in order; no secret force was used towards the grand jury to compel them to say yes upon the indictments, yet a great many true bills were found, and the persons accused were ordered to be tried for their offences. But at this point the comrades of the prisoners interfered. They collected in great numbers, sufficient to overawe the power which Sir Robert had with him, and came in a body to the court-house. There they entered, released their comrades from custody, and took possession of the court. The threats and remonstrances of the chief justice were utterly vain; the people cared not a snap of the fingers for them, and they openly defied Sir Robert in his own court. Nay, more, they took the book on which the witnesses were to have been sworn, and compelled Sir Robert to take an oath that he would never again sit in like session, and they called him traitor to the king and to the people of England.

Had they stopped here they would not have been guilty of

unpardonable crime, but they did not stop. They snatched the roll containing the names of the grand jurors away from the keeper of it, publicly declared the jurors traitors to the people, and unfit to live any longer. Acting on this declaration, they sought out these unfortunate men, and wherever they found them cut off their heads. The clerks and servants of the court experienced like treatment; their heads were stricken off and carried about on poles, amid the brutal mockery of the angry people. Sir Robert himself narrowly escaped with his life, and got back discomfited to London.

Sir Robert Hales, the Prior of St. John of Jerusalem in London, had a fine mansion, well stocked with all sorts of fat things, in the neighbourhood; and because he was hated by the people, they entered his grounds and utterly spoiled them, sacking the house, drinking up the wines, and destroying all that they could not carry away; after which they spread themselves over the country, raising the disaffected spirits in sad abundance — a profligate priest, calling himself Jack Straw, being at their head.

Before any steps could be taken to punish these people, other signs were given of the state of the popular mind, to one of which I was myself a witness; but before speaking of that, let me tell of another which was given by the people of Kent, and which was the first token the king's friends had of the rising in that county.

Sir Simon Burley, the late king's friend, and one much beloved by those of his own order, but reckoned an intolerably proud man, and contemptuous of the people, procured a commission, notwithstanding the late doings in Essex, and rode down on Whit Monday to Gravesend. With him were two sergeants-at-arms and a strong retinue of servants, ready to do their master's bidding even against the men of their own class. They rode into Gravesend town, where the people were making holiday, and pushed through the crowd with as little gentleness as courtesy. The people were in high spirits, and resented the rough treatment the horsemen gave them, not being at all deterred by the quality of Sir Simon.

One man among the crowd who made himself specially con-

spicuous was Robert Dell, a man well known all Gravesend over for a hardy fisherman and a thoroughly good fellow.

Now, unfortunately for him, his features bore a very strong likeness to some other man who had been born on Sir Simon Burley's estate, and who was of the class known as villeins in gross; in other words, mere slaves, dependent utterly on the will of their lord. This man had found the condition of slavery so intolerable that about four years before this time he had run away from his master, and gone no one knew whither. The likeness which Robert Dell, who was beyond question a freeman born, bore to the runaway, struck several of those in Sir Simon's retinue; and as Robert, as much in fun as in mischief, thrust himself forward with jest and raillery at the expense of the travellers, his honest features were identified in the minds of the servants with those of the bondman.

Sir Simon knew nothing of all this until his reeve, who rode immediately behind him, whispered him in the ear that Dell was his own property, and told him the circumstances under which he was so. A dark frown came across Sir Simon's stern face as he listened to the announcement that the man who had been jeering at him and inciting the people to annoy him was no other than a mere villein belonging to himself. There was no hasty anger in his look, fixed and determined though it was beyond expression, but a sort of cruel scorn which he would not suffer to grow into anger towards so abject a creature. Anger was for equals or superiors, not for slaves—so great a gentleman as Sir Simon must not be ruffled by the conduct of a base-born peasant; so looking as though he were enjoying the contrast between Dell's apparent position and that which he deemed his true one, he pointed to the unfortunate wretch, and bade the sergeant-at-arms arrest him.

There was a hush among the people, and a half-surprised, half-frightened look upon their faces, as the sergeant spurred his horse forward and laid his hand upon Dell's shoulder.

"Why am I arrested?" inquired Robert, no longer the gay man he had been five minutes before, appalled at the prospect thus suddenly laid before him of passing into one of those secret

prison-houses which were in hateful abundance throughout the country, the known and reputed terrors of which scared the minds of the boldest men. "Why am I arrested?" he repeated, while all around waited eagerly for the answer.

"You shall be told that soon enough," replied John Legge, the sergeant; "come instantly with me, and it were better for yourself you came quietly."

Poor Robert hesitated, with the sergeant's grip firm on his shoulder, dreading the power which, as a good citizen, he had ever respected, and fearing to oppose himself directly against it. He doubted, too, the fidelity of the people, who, hitherto silent, seemed indisposed to support him. Looking round him, however, he read sympathy and comfort in the eyes of the townsmen, and shaking himself free from the sergeant's hold, demanded again why he was arrested.

"Ay, give you reason, Sir Simon!" cried many of the bystanders. "Since the blessed Charta was ours, no man is to be passed upon without good cause shown; you must give reason, or Dell shall not go with you!"

At any other time Burley would have scorned to answer, but in the face of so large a body of men, and touched, it may be, by a sense of the justice of the demand, he answered—

"The man is my villein, born of a nief of mine; he ran from the manor to which he belongs. He is mine; the law gives him to me, and I claim him. He must go with me to Rochester."

The calm, authoritative voice with which this was said impressed the people, accustomed to dictation, and each looked at the other as if to inquire what should be done next, for they knew the law respecting villeins only too well, though they each and all desired to save Robert Dell from the clutches of it. The demand took them so much by surprise that they had not time to organise any resistance to it, and the one best man, who so often appears on emergencies of a similar description, was not forthcoming. At length, just as Sir Simon, tired of waiting in the street, and fearful, perhaps, of losing his advantage by delay, had ordered his servants to draw their weapons and force a passage with their prisoner, a

decent-looking man, having the appearance of a well-to-do citizen, stepped forward, and in a respectful way asked Burley what he would take as the price of Dell's manumission.

The truth was, that though Robert was well known all over Gravesend, coming there to sell the fish which he had caught in the Thames, he was not a townsman of the place, but hailed from Gillingham, so that, for aught many of those present knew to the contrary, the story told of his origin by Burley's servants might be perfectly true. As a matter of fact, Robert was a Gillingham man born and bred, the son of free parents, and never in bondage to any man. His likeness to the runaway caused him to be mistaken for him. Sir Simon Burley had not a shadow of right to him.

At the demand of the townsman, Burley smiled slightly, and said, without answering the question,

"The man seems to be a favourite with you here."

"He is so, my lord!" cried many a voice, thinking that the general suffrages would do something towards softening the heart of the man of power. But they mistook the drift of his question.

"Then you will be ready to pay a fair price for his freedom?" said Burley, with a cruel expression on his face.

"We will gladly pay for his freedom, my lord, if he be your lordship's villein," the people answered.

"But I am *not* his villein, nor any man's villein!" shouted Robert, indignant to his heart's core now he knew the cause of his arrest; "I am a freeman of Gillingham, neighbours, nor ever knew this man. I do not know the place where he says I was born."

"Proceed!" said Burley to his servants when he heard this speech; "the fool stands in his own light, I trow;" and the cavalcade was just moving forward with Robert, who had again been seized, when the good man of Gravesend, resolved to do Robert good in spite of himself, once more checked the progress of the party, and inquired the price to be paid for the prisoner.

"Three hundred pounds of silver, not a groat less!" answered Burley sharply, and signing to his men to push on, for he knew well enough he had named an impossible price for Dell, he rode

slowly forward through the people, proceeding with his prisoner in the direction of Rochester.

As soon as he had gone, the spirit of the people, which seemed spell-bound in his presence, broke out. Murmurs long and loud were followed by cries of—

“Let’s join our brethren of Essex! No more of this tyranny! Let us to Rochester, and release our fellow! Down with Duke John! Long live King Richard!”

These shouts were not all the people did towards showing their intentions. Sir Simon Burley had fired a train which was found to be connected with a most hoisting petard, and which nearly blew in the gates of government authority.

But before I speak of what was done, I will mention the other fact whereof I spoke just now as having witnessed it, and which added whatever was wanting to set the whole of Kent in a blaze of insurrection.

Archdale and I had been sent by Master Philpot on some matter of business as far as Dartford immediately after the events just mentioned, and before news of the rising in Essex had spread over the country.

It was a fine morning in the beginning of June when we rode into the town, and put our horses up at the hostelry which stands on the north side of the market-place. The people were bustling about their business, discussing the small news of the day, and inquiring, some of them, from those they thought likely to know, what it was that had been done at Gravesend. Reports of the late doings there had come in, and all sorts of stories were told, more or less untrue; for, in the absence of trustworthy information, folks gave their fancies wide range, and no one knew exactly what to believe. Some said the Gravesend men had cut off the heads of Sir Simon Burley and his servants; others, that Sir Simon had burned Gravesend, and put all the people to death; while some averred that the French Dauphin had sailed up the Thames, and was already in possession of the Tower of London.

This last report we were able to contradict emphatically, for when we left home in the early morning, Sir Robert Hales, the

treasurer, was in full possession of the Tower, with Simon de Sudbury, the Archbishop of Canterbury, stronger adherents than whom King Richard could not reckon. The other reports we were also enabled to modify, having heard something nearer the truth about the Gravesend affair. In the course of conversation with the merchant with whom our business lay, we spoke of the doings in Essex, in which Archdale had so nearly played a fatal part, the news of which things, though they happened a full fortnight since, had not yet been bruited about Dartford.

As Archdale was describing the scenes at Brentwood to our friend, our attention was drawn to a man, handsomely dressed and well mounted, who, followed by two servants wearing the royal livery, rode at a walking pace down the street. He wore a closely-fitting doublet of white cloth, with bars of scarlet lace down the front of it. His sleeves were puffed at the shoulder, and ornamented with blue ribbon knots; upon the left arm was the king's badge—a gold sun; and at the wrists the sleeves were finished off with rich blue velvet. He had fine leather upper hose, and buff leather boots coming as high as to the knee. A brown riding-cloak and a gay feather-decked cap of black velvet completed his attire. His arms consisted of a long, straight sword, suspended from a baldrick slung over his shoulder, and a costly-looking dagger which he carried in his belt.

He might have been thirty-three years of age. His face was like that of many who are found about kings' houses—handsome, dissolute-looking, and wearing an expression of contempt for those who are not as they are. The insolent leer with which he looked at modest maidens and matrons as he rode on his way gave unmistakable sign of the place whence he came.

"Who is that?" I asked, as the horseman passed the spot where we were standing.

"The king's tax-man, pest take him!" answered the merchant. "The fellow was here all yesterday, gathering in his hateful levies, and is about again, I reckon, on the same errand."

"He rides boldly, considering how the like of him fared in Essex," said Archdale.

"Indeed he does," rejoined the merchant; "maybe a little too boldly for his own good. I doubt the poorer folk will pay if what you have told me gets wind among them."

"'Twere better it should not do so," I observed, dreading a repetition of the Brentwood riot. "The king must have money to carry on his government, and if all refuse payment, how is that to be done?"

"Very true," said the merchant, "but the money should be levied more cautiously. The people might be spared the insolence of the tax-gatherers, even if they must pay the tax."

"Are there many complaints?" I asked.

"Are there not? Why, only Monday se'nnight one of these men——"

Before the merchant had time to finish his story, we were all three carried along in a tide of excited people, streaming from every house, towards the upper end of the street, whence shouts screams, and loudly-uttered curses were borne on the wind.

"What has happened?" "Where is it?" "Any one killed?" asked people of whom we might have asked the same questions, being ourselves ignorant of the cause of the tumult. Something evidently had gone very wrong, and every one seemed bent on knowing what it was, we among the number, and with that intention we went with the others towards the place whence the cries came.

As we were going a man ran past us, with flushed face, on which determination was written, coatless and hatless, and carrying, firmly clenched in his right hand, a long helving hammer.

"There goes John the tiler," cried several, as the man ran by; "what can the matter be?" and hurried on to ascertain for themselves.

Just before we turned the corner into the street where the disturbance was, a loud cheer was raised from a great number of voices, and then we heard a heavy fall. Again came the cheering, mingled with cries of "Down with the others!" "Kill all the vermin!" while the crowd opened its ranks, and two horsemen, whom we at once recognised as the tax-collector's servants, came spur-

ring through, brandishing their swords on either side of them, riding evidently for their very lives.

When we reached the spot these men had just quitted, a terrible scene presented itself. Blood was flowing down the kennel, and the houses on both sides of the street were bespattered with it. In the roadway, riderless, stood a fine charger, shivering all over with terror at what had befallen his master.

His master, the handsome, gaily-dressed fool who had passed us in his pride not twenty minutes back, lay steeped in his own blood in the middle of the road, his hat off, and disclosing to view a frightful wound which had been given him with a blow that had fairly knocked his skull in and his brains out. By the side of the body stood the man who lately ran past us — John the tiler, of Dartford — his hammer yet in his hand, but stained all over the head of it with blood. Near him was a good-looking English-woman, about forty years of age, who was his wife, and clinging to the left arm of the man-slayer was a pretty lass, some thirteen years old, who was, it seems, his daughter.

"He brought it on himself," said John, as we came up. "It was time to put a stop to these men's practices."

"Ay, that it was!" exclaimed a bystander. "There be some things even a slave cannot bear, and we are not slaves yet."


"Nor will be, for all the lords can do," cried another. "John has done no more nor less than what an honest man should do. It will teach those men not to play the knave in a poor man's house again."

Our friend, the merchant, who was also mayor of Dartford, here interposed, and called upon John the tiler to justify the act he had committed, while Archdale, with the assistance of some of the neighbours, lifted the dead body of the collector from the mire in the street, and carried it into the shelter of a house. The tiler's blow had put the man beyond the reach of surgery: he was quite dead. His horse was duly cared for, being taken to the mayor's own stables till it could be settled who was now its master.

According to the account given of the affair, the tax-gatherer had come to John's house while John was at work, and had de-

manded a groat per head for every one of the household above the age of fifteen, which was the rate the Parliament had fixed. John's wife paid for her husband and herself, and for two more of the family who were amenable to the tax, but for her young daughter she rightly claimed exemption. The tax-man insisted on payment for her, declaring that she was fifteen years old. The dispute waxed warm, and as it was carried on in the open street, soon attracted many of the neighbours, who, knowing the year in which the maiden was born, bore out the assertion of her mother as to her age. The man, thinking probably that his office and badge secured him, advanced to where the girl stood, and began to take liberties with her, putting his arm round her waist. Some neighbour, seeing before this time that the man was insolent, had run to John, who was working at a house near at hand, and told him the tax-gatherer was insulting his wife, and just as the fellow had taken hold of the maiden, John came up.

The man had just time to let go his hold and draw his sword, for the threatening look of the tiler warned him of what was coming. He had time to do this, but no more. Before he could use his weapon upon his assailant, John's hammer descended with terrific violence upon his head. He fell at length, in the place where we found him, lifeless with one stroke of the deadly hammer.



CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE RISING OF THE COMMONS—WAT TYLER BESIEGES ROCHESTER CASTLE.

“ Jacke Trueman doeth you to understand,
That falseness and guile hath reigned too long;
And truth hath been set under a locke,
And falseness reigneth in every flocke.”

Ballad of the period.



HE Mayor of Dartford wisely forbore to arrest John the tiler. The people would not have allowed it, for the common opinion was that the tax-gatherer had been rightly served. There was another circumstance, however, which tended to make the arrest impossible. Messengers had come in from Gravesend to tell the men of Dartford what had been done there, and how it was intended to join hands with the Essex men, who were now risen in large numbers, and to march to London. The messengers were speedily followed by many hundreds from Gravesend, who had spread the news of the rising in the district between the two towns, and had been promised help as soon as it could be provided.

Dartford, inflamed by the events of the morning, and further moved by what it heard from its neighbours, rose in a mass, and sent all the arms-bearing men with the insurgents to Maidstone, which was fixed upon as the seat of the rebellion. Wat Tyler *

* An idea has been entertained that Wat Tyler, the captain of the rebels, was identical with the man whose daughter was insulted by the tax-gatherer, and who slew the man in her defence. In this way a dignity not due to it has been lent to the character of Wat Tyler, who in all his acts seems to have been the rough and rather brutal man he showed himself when he badgered King Richard in Smithfield. John the tiler, of Dartford, who slew the tax-gatherer, does not appear to have taken any lead in the rebel-

(called also Wat the helver, Wat Helyer), of that town, had been chosen captain of the Kentish rebels, and before the Dartford contingent reached him he had begun operations.

He first gave orders that none who dwelt within twelve miles of the sea should join the main body, but band themselves together for the defence of the coasts in their respective districts. The king's justices, who had been sent to hold a session at Canterbury, for the purpose of trying such of the malcontents as could be presented before them, he sent back to London faster than they came from it, and thoroughly prevented the fulfilment of their commission. He then led his men to Rochester, of which he took possession, and besieged the castle, defended by the governor, Sir John Newton.

Rochester Castle was the first place of strength which had been found to stem the tide of rebellion. As soon as the doings of the Kentish men were made known to the governor, he took such measures as he could to hold them in check. He at first resolved to take the field with the garrison of Rochester Castle and such other levies as on the spur of the moment might be got together; but he found not only that no additional help was procurable on account of the general disaffection, but that it was doubtful if he could depend on the fidelity of the garrison itself. He therefore determined to keep to the castle, and to defend it to the uttermost.

In going the rounds on the first morning after putting the castle in a posture of defence, Sir John Newton found cause to think that what he had heard about the doubtful character of the garrison was not at all exaggerated. At the barbican tower he found the guard without arms, leaning over the parapet, and talking to some countrymen who stood at the gate below.

"How now, fellow?" cried Sir John; "is it thus you keep

lion, which was organised in Kent as well as in Essex before he laid his hand to his hammer in the way he did. *John* resented a private wrong, as *Virginius* did in old Rome—Wat Tyler, a Maidstone man, aspired to redressing more general wrongs; but similarity of surname (which did but indicate the trade) has caused a halo of romance and a sort of chivalric dignity to be lent to him which of right belongs to John Tyler, a Dartford man.

watch? Stand to your arms instantly, or I'll throw you over the parapet!"

The man slowly withdrew from his leaning posture and faced his enraged master, but made no sign of reaching his crossbow, which rested against the battlement alongside of him. He looked as though he would like to be insolent in speech as well as in manner, but Sir John Newton anticipated him with a well-aimed buffet from his open hand, which sent him reeling against the stone parapet.

"That's the last blow you'll give me, Newton," cried the soldier. "We, the good commons, call you to account. Ho! help, friends!" he shouted to the men below, who were incendiaries from the town come to tamper with the garrison, and these shouted in answer, to encourage the soldier; but he, like many other of the malcontents, reckoned without his master. It was vain for him to cry for help to men who were separated from him by walls such as those of Rochester Castle. Scarcely had the last word left his lips ere he was felled to the ground by the hand of Sir John Newton, and before he had time to recover his scattered senses, he found himself in the clutches of the guard.

"Give the fellow two score lashes with a cow-hide, to teach him manners, and then kick the knave out of the castle. See it is done, Michael," he added, turning to his lieutenant; and before the man well knew where he was his back was tingling with two score cow-hide marks, and he was thrust forth ignominiously into the society of the companions upon whom he had rather prematurely called.

Though this well-timed severity was not without its effect upon the garrison, the occasion which had given rise to it was also not without significance. There were signs of unwillingness on the part of others besides the offender, and though for the present his orders were obeyed, Sir John Newton felt that the case might be different when an army of rebels should be encamped round the castle.

And so, indeed, he found it. With one voice the rebels clamoured for the liberation of Robert Dell, whom Sir Simon Burley seized in the town of Gravesend and sent a prisoner to

Rochester Castle; and Wat Tyler, yielding to the cry which he could not control had he wished it, led them to the spot where Dell was confined.

Rochester Castle was built by Bishop Gundulph, the first bishop of the diocese after the Conquest, and is a place of very great strength. From the border of the river Medway, on the Chatham side of it, there rises abruptly a fair mound of earth that is the seat on which the castle sits. Its lofty keep—a square tower built of grey stone—is a conspicuous object, which may be seen from Gravesend and Chatham; and surrounding it, stretching to the river on the one side and to the foot of the hill towards Chatham on the other, is a line of lesser fortifications defending the minor forts and buildings, while at the back of all the land takes a gradual rise leading to the heights which overlook Chatham, Stroud, Rochester town, and the county of Kent for many miles round.

The urgency of the case in which Sir John Newton found himself did not allow of laying in a stock of provisions for more than ten days, and the general disaffection which prevented the levy of troops to enable Sir John to take the field, also prevented him from strengthening his slender garrison by additional soldiers. He had not enough to man all the defences in the event of a vigorous attack, and of those he had there were, as I have said, some who hung back, and one who had actually mutinied.

Sir John Newton went back to the keep after he had been his rounds, and then resolved he would send a messenger at once to Canterbury, to warn the authorities there of the danger which threatened them.

Hardly had he given his orders and sent the messenger away, when Michael, his lieutenant, came with a blank face and reported that the rebels were in sight.

"That's bad intelligence, Michael," said Sir John, "but we can surely hold this place against them."

"We might if we all had a mind to," answered Michael.

"But we have a mind to do so, I suppose?" returned Sir John, looking searchingly at his lieutenant.

Michael professed that, so far as he was concerned, he would stand by his master in whatever he did, "but I doubt the garrison," he added.

"Has there been any fresh sign of mutiny?" inquired the governor.

"Ay, sir, that there has," replied Michael: "only just now as I came hither I heard John Stokes the armourer say to his mates that he would not fight against his own friends when they came; and the other fellows swore they wouldn't either, and as I came up they shook their fists at me and bade me say my prayers, for I should not have many more opportunities."

"Is this talk general among the men, think you?" asked Sir John, anxiously.

"Indeed, I think it is, sir, more's the pity. As far as my poor life goes, they 're welcome to it if it will do them any good, though it's a little hard to die by ruffians' hands after all these years of honest service."

"Keep a stout heart, man, and look well to the defences. I have a dearer charge even than you," said Sir John, turning to where his motherless children stood, "and depend on it I do not mean to quail—and before scum like this! See that the stone-thrower* be in order and issue the extra arms, whilst I go out and speak to the men." And so saying, Sir John, who had donned his body armour and buckled on his sword, quitted the room, and went towards the castle guard, where the majority of his soldiers were.

Having drawn the men up in a crescent, Sir John Newton addressed them in a few simple words.

"My men," said he, "you are well aware of the tumults which have broken out amongst some of the people of this county, and you also know that a number of them, led on by wicked men who are stirring up these people's passions for their own selfish ends, are marching hither for the purpose of doing more violence, quite

* A war engine which hurled stones, and constructed on the principle of the catapult.

forgetting their duty to our lord the king, and heedless of the consequences which must follow their evil behaviour.

"Now, if the people have ground for complaint, they are not going the best way to secure their rights. Though they may have success—such as it is—for a short time, they will fail miserably in the end, and punishment will fall heavily upon them for all their misdeeds. I am sorry to hear that some of you have spoken foolishly and talked like rebels.

"Now, I want you to understand that as this castle has been committed to my keeping, I intend to hold it till I can do so no longer, and I am persuaded that I *can* hold it, even with this weak garrison, if you men prove faithful. If you do you shall have your reward; but if while I command here I find any shrinking from duty, or any sign of participation with the rebels outside, be assured that I will not spare what I hate—a traitor! How say you? Shall I reckon on you?"

An ominous silence followed Sir John Newton's appeal, which was renewed, and then came murmurs, and from some cries of "We don't mean to kill our friends!" "We won't be taxed!" But these cries were few, and soon drowned in the shout which the well-wishers of the governor raised of "Long live Sir John Newton! We'll hold to you, sir! Reckon on us!" So that Sir John Newton knew that if there were ready-made traitors in the castle, there were also some true men, and of these, he thought, a sufficient number to defend the keep if the worst that could happen should come.

He dismissed the men to their posts, taking care that the best disposed should be within easy recall, and then went to judge for himself as to the character of his intended assailants.

Walking down the slope of the hill, he could see before the castle outer walls the dense ranks of the rebels, whose great mass surged through the town towards the gates of the castle, at which already rough summonses had been made. A trusty guard of some twenty men had possession of the gate, the porteuillis of which was lowered and strengthened by additional iron bars of enormous thickness, so that there was no entrance but for friends. Through

the openings of the grille, unkempt, unwashed creatures were thrusting their arms and throwing missiles at the warders inside, while the yellings for admission and the threats in case of non-compliance were something dreadful to hear.

Sir John Newton ascended from the base-court to the roof of the barbican, and made signs to the mob that he desired to speak with their leaders; and after experiencing much difficulty in getting a hearing, he managed to find some one to take a message to the rebel chief.

The sight which presented itself to the knight's eye while he stood waiting for the messenger's return—during all which time his ears were assailed by the most hideous language from the people below—was a sad one. Smoke rising from many a well-known spot in the landscape marked the scene of some wild act of fury committed on the property of his friends, and how their lives fared he was in painful ignorance. The sight, however, of several ghastly heads, stuck on spear-ends and borne aloft in triumph by the rabble, gave significant indications how some had been served. Here and there among the crowd were seen orators employing their whole stock of eloquence in exciting the minds of their hearers with tales of their wrongs, and ever and anon they pointed to the castle, shaking their fists at it, from which Sir John Newton gathered that the people were being exhorted to an attack upon that.

In a very short time the messenger returned, and shouted above the din which arose from all around that the great captain Wat Tyler would presently speak with John Newton.

Wat Tyler came accordingly. He was a man about the middle height, with very broad shoulders, and a chest that would have done for bellows to any blacksmith's forge. His face was heavy and the expression of it rather repulsive, redeemed only by his truly handsome blue eyes, which were overhung by bushy eyebrows that met at the top of his uncomely turned-up nose. His brown hair was rough and matted with mud and plaister, picked up from his work; his shaggy beard hid the lower part of his face and rendered less conspicuous the deformity of his heavy jowl.

Dressed partly in his own habiliments, partly in clothing filched from the plundered houses, Wat Tyler looked emphatically like a king of beggars. The handsome horse he rode had never before carried any but a noble burden, and by his behaviour evidently resented its present employment. With some ado to manage the creature, Wat Tyler rode up to the barbican gate of Rochester Castle and inquired if John Newton, a false knight, were there.

"I am John Newton, Sir Rebel, but no false knight," said the governor.

"What wouldst thou have of me, Newton?" asked the great captain. "Come down, and I will speak with thee."

Sir John concealed his anger at this insolence, being resolved to give no occasion that might be avoided for violence on the other side, but he was equally firm in his resolution not to trust himself into the rebel's hands. "I cannot come to thee, man," he said, "but I would fain know of thee what all this tumult and assemblage may mean."

"These men are the true commons, knight, and want to give the king their advice," answered Tyler: "they have come from far and near for the purpose, and are now on their road to see him."

"His majesty will scarcely thank them for breaking the country's peace," returned Sir John.

"Oh! that's nothing. Just the fellows' humour. They're strange dogs some of them, I can tell you. Look there, and there, and there!" cried Wat, pointing to the grisly heads on the spear-ends. "See you those, John Newton? They are the heads of lords that have lorded it long enough. We are going to have our turn now."

As Wat Tyler spoke, the head-bearers brought their horrid loads to the castle gate and thrust them up within sight of the governor, who recognised among those round which the people were jeering and mocking the head of one of his most dear and valued friends.

"Take those objects away and bury them, you wretches!" cried Sir John, and turning again to Wat Tyler, inquired why he had brought this rabble thither.

"Rabble, forsooth!" cried Wat, "a fine name for the commons of England. I'll tell thee, Newton, why they have come and what they mean to do. They come to let out Robert Dell, the freeman whom that cursed Burley took, and they mean as well to have Rochester Castle, though John Newton its governor talk never so big."

"What ho! there!" shouted Sir John, now thoroughly angry, "bid the bowmen come to the front, and man the stone-thrower immediately." And Michael the lieutenant ran and gave the order, but no man stirred to obey it.

"Must I speak twice?" shouted Sir John, hoarse with rage. "You mutinous dogs, I'll punish you myself;" and he drew his sword with the intention of making some mother childless, and ran to the head of the steps leading off the barbican tower. It might have been accidental or it might have been put there on purpose, but an obstruction on one of the stone steps caused Sir John Newton to fall forward on his hands and knees, and the shock made his sword to fly from his hand.

Before he could recover his feet he found himself seized and bound by some of his own garrison, the armourer John Stokes being apparently the leader of the party. At the same time the screams and shouts of the rabble close beside him and the sight of their wild figures capering about him showed him that the castle had been gained. Treachery and disaffection had done their work; the well-disposed among the garrison were much outnumbered by those who swore they "would not fight against their friends," and were easily overpowered. The traitors opened the gate at the barbican and also at the several posterns, raised the portcullis, and let in such a rout as had never before darkened the inside of Rochester Castle.

"Let's flog him with a cow-hide," cried one, pointing to Sir John Newton, who lay in his armour, a somewhat ludicrous figure, with his arms and legs fast bound with thongs.

"Let's cut his head off—here's a sickle," said another, offering the implement and his own services.

"Better fry him in that tin box he's got into," suggested a

third, while another said they had better keep him till he had told them where his treasures were hid.

"Can you write?" asked a dredger from Stroud, leaning over the prostrate knight with a large bill-hook in his hand.

"No," said Sir John.

"Nor read, eh?" pursued his questioner.

The same answer was returned.

"Did you never tax anybody? Answer me to that," said the dredgerman.

Sir John with a clear conscience could also deny that he had ever arrogated to himself the function of Parliament in this respect, and so he did.

"He can't be so bad a fellow, after all, then," said the dredger to his mates. "Quite sure you can't write?—not so much as your own name?" he said, again addressing Sir John.

"Quite sure," was the answer.

"Then hang me if you shall be hurt so long as Tom the dredger lives to stand by you. No, no, mates," he continued, turning to the crowd, "if he could ha' written but his own name he might ha' had his head split for me; it's the writing, with those lying things they put on poor sheep's skins, that does the harm; but you see he can't do it, so I mean to forgive him; and as for taxing us, he's had no hand in that."

"But he's one of the lords! He's got tenants! He's enclosed his lands! He keeps the game all to himself! Down with him! Off with his head!" These cries burst from one and another of the mob, who considered that the mere fact of having property was a crime not to be pardoned. But Tom the dredger's mind had been powerfully impressed with the answers given to his questions by Sir John Newton, and he determined to stand by his promise to befriend the prisoner for the all-sufficient reason that he could not write nor read.

"I'll tell you what it is, my masters," said Tom, who was a burly man of notorious strength, "whoever wants to do anything to that man there must first have to do with Tom of Stroud, mark that now! I'll protect him. Where are your manners, you dogs

to want to use a man according to Lydford law,* just as if you were no better than so many lords? Come, now, I mean to take him to worshipful Master Tyler, who, I reckon, should have the disposing of him. Soft you there, Sir Knight, those foot-bands look a little irksome. There!" And with that Tom the dredger of Stroud snipped the cord which held Sir John Newton's feet, and bade him stand up.

Sir John rose with the assistance of the dredger, for his hands were still secured, and stood by the side of his rough friend.

"Keep a brave heart, knight!" said the dredger encouragingly: "if I may save thee I will."

"I fear not death nor anything that can happen to myself, friend Tom," answered Sir John; "but my poor children! have a care of them."

"Never fear for them, man! These fellows, though rough, are

* The expression "according to Lydford law" is very old. Mention is made of it in a monkish ballad, written on the deposition of Richard II., where it is alluded to as a thing well known. The way in which it is used would be long to describe without giving an extract from the poem, for which there is not space here, but any one can see for himself by turning to page 399 of the first volume of "Political Songs and Poems," published under the superintendence of the Master of the Rolls.

Lydford, near Coriton, on the skirts of Dartmoor, was, as quaint old Westcote says, "entrusted with the keeping of the prince's prisoners for stannary causes. But," he goes on to say, "what mean I to make so long a description of it, in regard it is so commonly sung by many a fidler; being very exactly and facetely done in a running metre by William Browne, a very witty gentleman, pleasantly disposed." The ballad was written apparently when James I. was king, and Charles, Prince of Wales. It explains the meaning which Tom the dredger intended to convey.

"I oft have heard of Lydford law,
How in the morn they hang and draw,
And sit in judgment after.
At first I wondered at it much,
But since I find the matter such
As it deserves no laughter."

The ballad is a long one. For it and for further information on the subject of Lydford law, see a series of "West Country Legends," written by the author, and published in the "Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine" for the year 1866.

F. D.

not cruel. They're bent on destroying their oppressors, and no wonder, but their business is not with women and children."

And what Tom said was true. During the whole of the rebellion, though acts of cruelty were freely committed on those whom the people judged to be their foes—as will be seen later on when I come to tell of the fate of the Archbishop of Canterbury—there were not any well-founded complaints of harshness used towards women and children.

Wat Tyler established his head-quarters in the castle keep, whither he sent for Sir John Newton just as Tom was about to lead him thither. On their way they met Robert Dell, escorted by a tumultuous rout, shouting and screaming for joy at having effected his release.

"Clap him in the same hole! Give him the same sort of food as freeman Dell had," they shouted as Sir John Newton was led past.

"He shall put no more freemen in ward, I promise him!" cried one who knew not that the prisoner was under the special protection of Tom of Stroud, and therefore aimed a stone at him which drew blood from his cheek.

"Coward!" roared Tom, "the man is bound!" and appealing for the rest of his argument rather to the fellow's feelings than his understanding, he felled him to the ground with one blow from his fist.

"Well done, Tom! Serve the fellow right!" exclaimed the bystanders, who being in good humour at so easily winning the castle, without loss of life or limb to any one, and still more pleased at the plentiful plunder to be had from the castle, were inclining to the merciful side, and not a few who erewhile proposed to fry Sir John Newton in his armour, cut off his head with a sickle, and otherwise attend to him, now proposed to put him at their head; "for," said they, "it's better to be led by a knight than a tiler."

To his own private apartments Sir John Newton was conducted, and there he found, seated in his own chair, Wat Tyler, the captain of the rebels.

"Bring the prisoner before me!" cried Wat, who scowled from

under his thick eyebrows at the unfortunate nobleman. "Unbind his hands."

These orders being obeyed, Wat Tyler began to question Sir John Newton as to how much of the king's treasure there was in the castle; whether the bishop had lodged aught there, and if so where it was hidden; whether there were any more prisoners than those who had been freed; and finally, how much he himself would give for his own ransom.

"For treasure belonging to his Majesty, there is none here, nor has my lord the bishop deposited aught with me. For prisoners, I know not how many you have freed, but there were some among them that will do you small credit. As for ransom," continued Sir John Newton, smiling, "I am too poor a knight to make any offer, and to say truth, though I have seen service both in France and Spain, this is the first time I have had to consider the subject."

Sir John Newton was, as he said, a poor knight, and the custody of such a castle as that of Rochester, in that it gave him a dignified lodging and a position of which he was eminently worthy, was most acceptable to him, with the fees and seigniorial rights which it brought with it. He had conducted himself in the discharge of his duty as governor in such a way as to win popularity in the neighbourhood, and the fact that he was a poor knight, and could not therefore oppress any villeins, stood him in good stead at the present juncture.

"We have not heard anything against you, Newton," said Tyler, assuming the royal mode of speech, "and are therefore willing to let you have your life; for be sure that had you done any of the things which your neighbours have done, off would go your head. We grant you leave to live, but since you cannot make an offer for ransom beyond what the commons will take from your castle here, you must do some service to us instead. You shall be groom to me, and you must drill these men into proper companies, as you know how."

"I cannot do these things," said Sir John; "they would be against my duty to his Majesty."

"How now, fellow, when I have given thee life!" shouted Wat, striking his fist on the table; "thou shalt do them or rue the denial. I'll have thy head cut off on this table!"

"I am unfortunately in your power, so far as my life is concerned," said Sir John, "but you cannot make me do your will by cutting off my head. I thank God I do not fear death."

"Ho! ho! are you there with me?" cried the demagogue, anxious to feel and make felt his newly-gotten power. "Bring forth those brats of his, and let him see them die. We'll find a way to bend his knightship, I warrant!"

And with ferocious glee some of the savages went and drew out of an inner room Sir John Newton's three motherless children.

The eldest, a fair-haired boy of twelve, seemed wholly occupied in protecting his little sister, who clung to him in terror and alarm, begging of him not to let "those ugly men" touch her "with their dirty hands," and to take her to her father directly. The youngest, a man of five years old, stood fiercely at bay with a short iron poker that he had snatched up in defence. With all the might of his little arms he belaboured the shins of the man who had caught hold of him, and valiantly defied the whole army of the rebels.

A smile flitted across Sir John Newton's pale face at the sight of this small David attacking the Kentish Goliath, and even the rough creatures who looked on could not help applauding the valorous attempts of the youngster to rid himself of his foe.

The children were dragged to where Wat Tyler sat, and told that they must obey him now, because he was their master, and would beat them if they were not dutiful.

"You're not our master, you dirty wretch!" cried the five-year-old man; "my father's master of this castle, and you'd better not let him see you in his chair, I can tell you, with those filthy clothes of yours. What have you done with my father?" And as he said this the little man drew himself up and looked every inch a warrior.

"There's father," said Wat, grinning in spite of himself: "it's not much mastery he has here, I reckon, eh, mates?"

Before a response could be given the children recognised their father, and the little girl ran to him with a cry of delight, entreating him to "send those naughty men away."

"Now, Newton," said Tyler, grasping the shoulder of the eldest boy, "I give you one more chance. Take my terms, or this lad dies now! and then that, and that, and then *you* shall die. By the commons of England I swear it, and what's more, will do it. Speak!"

There was no doubt of the intention of Wat Tyler in case of continued obstinacy on the part of Sir John. The boy, like a brave fellow as he was, stood without blenching for the decision which to him was life or death, and Sir John Newton stood still amidst profound silence, looking at his children till he was nearly unmanned.

"I *must* accept your terms," said he at length; "and may Heaven and his Majesty pardon me."

"Swear on this sword that you will be faithful to the true commons, that you will never recognise any king named John, and that you will do your duty like a proper servant in whatever you have given you to do," said Tyler, presenting a sword, which Sir John Newton touched as he repeated the words, adding at the end "God save King Richard!" to which the rioters lustily responded.

"May I send my children into safe keeping?" asked Sir John. "This is not the place for such young things."


"No!" answered Tyler, "they are hostages for your good behaviour. Hob Miller will see to them."

And to that worthy the children were accordingly made over.

After being made to conduct the leaders over the whole of the castle, which was rifled of every valuable it contained, Sir John Newton was set to drill the half-naked savages in the castle guard, a service in which he had the forced help of Michael, his *quondam* lieutenant, and of several of his late dependents.

CHAPTER XL.

THE MARCH TO BLACKHEATH—AN AFFRONT TO THE PRINCESS
OF WALES—ANXIETY OF THE LONDONERS—SIR JOHN NEW-
TON SENT ON A MISSION.

T were over-long to give details of every movement of the rebels. After a short stay at Rochester, Wat Tyler went to Canterbury, where he was joined by five hundred men of the city, and made himself master of all the strong places. He summoned the clergy to meet him in a chapter at the cathedral, and commanded them to elect a new archbishop; "For," said he, "the man who is now archbishop is a tyrant and a traitor, and shall speedily be beheaded." As earnest of what he intended to do further, he seized three of the chief men of the city, who were known to be stanch supporters of the government, and beheaded them publicly in the Cathedral Close. The mayor, the bailiffs, and all the magistrates within reach were compelled, on pain of instant death, to take an oath that they would be faithful to King Richard and the commons of England; that they would accept no king whose name was John (meaning the Duke of Lancaster); nor ever pay any tax that might be ordered, unless it were a fifteenth, as used to be given.

At Canterbury, John Ball, a priest who had been thrice imprisoned by the archbishop on account of his bold preaching, offered his services to the rebels, who declared he should be the new archbishop and chancellor to boot. After they had accepted fellowship with him, he got upon a knoll of ground which was in the market-place, and harangued the people upon the cause of their rising, for as yet it was by no means clear to many of them what it was they were contending for.

“My friends,” said Ball, “you have indeed done well to rise in arms against your oppressors the lords, for be sure you will get redress in no other way. Your *lords*, do I say? Who made them lords? Who was it decreed that we should be their slaves? I trow there was neither gentleman nor slave when Adam and Eve dwelt in Eden. Were not all men made alike by nature? Bondage, my brethren, was brought in by the unjust oppression of naughty men against the will of God; for if it had pleased God to have made bondmen, He would have appointed them from the beginning of the world, and shown who should be slave and who lord. Consider, therefore, this time as sent to you by God, in order that you may shake off this yoke of bondage, and enjoy that freedom to which you are entitled. Make good use of it, and show yourselves to be men. Down with the bishops who persecute you wickedly! and the lawyers and justiciars, who are all so many questmongers, forging the fetters for your free feet, and helping the lords to tyrannise over you! I tell you, my friends, it will never be well with England until everything shall be in common—when there shall neither be vassal nor lord, and the lords shall be no more masters than ourselves. These lords are clothed in velvets and rich stuffs, decked with ermine and costly furs, while we who get them these are forced to go in sackcloth. They have wines, and spices, and fine bread, when we have nought but rye and the refuse of the straw, and would we drink, we must drink water. They have manors and handsome houses, but we must bear the wind and rain with our labours in the fields, and yet whose hands but ours support the pomp in which they live? We are called slaves, and must toil or be beaten, and we have not any sovereign to whom we can complain, or who wishes to hear us and do justice. Let us go to the king, for he is young and may be reasoned with. Let us demand the punishment of those men who have so horribly oppressed us, and tell the king that he must change our servitude for freedom, or we shall know well what remedy to run to. Submit no longer! Up, and be doing, or I wis the lords will be upon us; and then, if we are unready, farewell liberty!”

Shouts of "Down with the nobles!" "No tax!" "No slavery!" "Long live King Richard!" interrupted and followed this oration of John Ball. The people grew more and more excited, rushing frantically about the place with these shibboleths in their mouths, demanding to be led on immediately to London. Poor Sir John Newton was forced to put himself at the head of the rebels, under the command of Wat Tyler, and to marshal them into companies, that they might look like regular troops and march orderly.

The Dartford men joined their comrades at Maidstone, as already mentioned; and at the same time news of the rising having spread into Sussex, Hertford, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk, the people of those counties imitated the example of the Kent and Essex men, rose in infinite numbers under different captains of their own choosing, and proceeded to extraordinary acts of violence. They hunted out all those who had anything to do with the administration of the law—apprentices, justices, grand jurymen, and others—and struck off their heads, saying that the land could never enjoy thorough freedom until these were got rid of.

Then they ransacked the manors and court-houses to get at the rolls and records, which they burned in triumph, so that the lords might have no memorial of their rights in time to come; and at length they became so mad in their fury, that they destroyed every person whom they found to possess pens and ink, for they said that all learning was useless except for purposes of oppression, and they would have no more of it. Every one who could write, they cut off his head.

In spite of these doings, whereof intelligence came in from hour to hour to the king's ministers in London, little or nothing was done towards meeting the danger. The whole of the eastern and south-eastern counties were in lawless hands, and the council did not move a finger till the tide of rebellion swept close to London.

As the Kentish men had done by Sir John Newton, the other rebels did by the gentlemen of their counties, in some cases treat-

ing them most vilely for the mere gratification of seeing their disgust. John Litislar, a dyer, of Norwich, assumed the command there, styling himself King of the Commons. He caught Lord Scales, Sir William Morley, Sir Stephen Hales, and Sir Thomas Cossington, and compelled them to do menial offices about his person. Sir Stephen Hales, because he was a comely knight, he made to carve for him at table, and taste the meats before they were handed to him. The Earl of Suffolk, William de Ufford, narrowly escaped the clutches of the rebels, getting away to London disguised as a servant, bearing a wallet upon his back.

An affront was offered to the Princess Dowager, the mother of the king, which fortunately extended no further than to a slight loss of dignity. The rebels were not as a body wicked rebels, and the princess, as widow to the beloved Black Prince, was secure from gross violence at their hands, though not from annoyance, as will be shown.

She was on a visit to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury when the rebellion first broke out, and it was the messenger despatched by Sir John Newton just before Rochester Castle was invested who brought the news to the city which caused the princess's immediate flight. Attended by her own personal servants and a slender guard of trusty soldiers who had fought under her late husband, she quitted Canterbury, and took the great Roman road to London. The delicate state of her health would not allow of her travelling on horseback, so a whirlicote, drawn by four fleet horses, was provided for her, and in this she set out upon her journey. The ladies of her party were mounted behind some of the men-servants, according to custom, and the guard rode ahead and at the rear of the car.

By dint of extraordinary exertion and frequent changes of horses, the greater part of the journey was accomplished by three o'clock in the afternoon, which time found the travellers in the neighbourhood of Dartford. This town had not yet recovered from the excitement into which the affair of the tax-gatherer had thrown it, and it would have been more prudent in the chief of the princess's household had he avoided the place. But fresh

horses were to be got at Dartford if they were to reach London in good time; and the chief, not unreasonably perhaps, thought that the princess might be considered safe.

"Who are those wild-looking people?" asked the lady of an attendant, as some of the Dartford folk came grinning and chattering about the car.

"What do you want, good people?" she asked, not waiting for an answer to her former question.

"We don't want any taxes, that's what we *don't* want, nor any fine ladies with idle servants about them," said some of the people.

"What's *your* name, my pretty maiden?" asked one rough fellow of a lady of the suite, who was mounted behind one of the lackeys, taking hold of her hand.

"He is insulting one of my ladies" cried the princess, starting up in her car.

"That I'm not, dame," answered the man: "I'm only bidding for a kiss from a prettier lass than one generally meets in his day's walk."

He was just about to pluck the girl off her seat and bestow his unwelcome attentions, when a smart blow across his neck and shoulders from one of the horsemen's thongs made him let go his hold and turn to his own defence.

Some of the men were for taking the horses out of the traces, and making the princess stop to supper with them, while others climbed into the body of the car where the lady was sitting, and declared that as everybody was free now, they could all ride together.

"I'll teach you about that, you filthy brutes!" said an old Poitiers man, who had also been employed at the time of the Jacquerie to deal with the French insurgents.

And before the poor fools could realise the equality which was represented by sitting in the same carriage with a princess, they were hauled out of it again by the napes of their necks and flung into the roadway.

The rear guard had now come up, and the advance had wheeled round, making a good knot of tried soldiers, who could do much

against a rabble. Whether the people were awed by the determined appearance of the soldiery, or whether the prayers and entreaties of the princess prevailed over them I know not, but no further molestation was offered, and the party proceeded on its way as quickly as possible, not staying at Dartford for fresh horses, but resolved to take its chance at some place nearer to London. It was past six o'clock when the Princess of Wales and her little party crossed London Bridge, and seven o'clock ere they reached the Tower gates, which were instantly opened to admit them.

In the Tower they found the king, the Earl of Salisbury, and the primate, with Sir Robert de Namur and other gentlemen who were of the royal household.

When Archdale and I returned to London, after witnessing the death of the tax-collector at Dartford, we gave instant information of what we had seen, and of what was to be expected from the bearing of the countrymen.

Master Philpot lost not an hour in communicating with the common council, upon whom he strongly urged the taking of immediate steps to provide for the safety of the city; for it was well known—and, if proof were wanted, such scenes as were exhibited on the night the friar preached at Paul's Cross were evidence—that many thousands of the lower order of Londoners were extremely disaffected, and would be sure to sympathise with the insurgents.

Long and anxious was the debate among the citizens in their council. William Walworth, the mayor, earnestly invited the co-operation and advice of his fellows in the strait wherein the city was, imploring them not to imitate the evil example of the lords, who even yet had not provided a remedy for the mischief in the country, but by union to strengthen his hands against the foe inside and outside the walls, so that the city at least might be saved harmless.

The appeal was not in vain. Small quarrels and petty jealousies were, for the nonce, set aside, and each man promised to do his utmost to help the lord mayor. The aldermen engaged themselves to go round their respective wards once in the night, and to pro-

vide extra watchmen. The sheriffs were sent for, and directed to be ready to act with force on the first summons. Special directions were given to the bedels for the more rigorous enforcement of the standing order which forbade any person, after curfew rung at St. Martin's-le-Grand, St. Lawrence, or Allhallows Barking, to appear in the streets with sword, buckler, or any other arms, unless it were "great lords or men of substance, and such of their household as go before them with lights;" to arrest and carry to the Tun, on Cornhill, all such persons as they might find at night in the streets unfurnished with lanterns and unable to give a good account of themselves. The wine taverns were to be shut exactly at eight o'clock, and, lest they should be made a cover for riotous meetings, the markets which the butchers are wont to hold by candlelight at St. Nicholas, Newgate, and at the Stokkes, were to be discontinued. For the more effectual prevention of assemblies, as well as to impede the escape of rioters, stout chains were ordered to be placed across the end of each street, with trusty men to guard them. Double watches were ordered at each of the city gates, and the men of Bishopsgate and Bridge Wards were required to furnish an extra guard at their gates, because those were the gates at which the Essex and Kentish men were likely to seek admission.

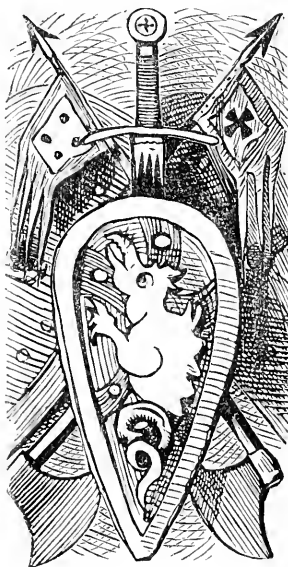
These cautious steps having been taken, the city council broke up, having set a good example which it behoved the lords to follow. But they did not: they delayed still further. The king certainly withdrew from Windsor to the Tower of London, and the Princess Dowager, his mother, had come into the same place of safety; but, instead of gathering a force with which to oppose the rebels, the king sent a messenger to them at Blackheath, where they lay, to inquire the cause of their rising in arms.

Wat Tyler, to whom the messenger addressed himself, declined to send any answer by him, but ordered "his knight," as he called him—poor Sir John Newton—to proceed to London to the king, and tell him that the people were resolved to do him good, to rid him of the traitors who surrounded him, and to treat with him for a charter of liberties; that the kingdom had been badly governed

and dishonoured by the king's uncles and the clergy, especially by the Lord Chancellor, from whom they meant to exact an account of his ministry.

Sir John had nothing for it but to obey. Wat Tyler kept Sir John's children as hostages for his good faith, and, vowing the most frightful vengeance in case he should not return, made him promise to carry the message to the king.

With a heavy heart the knight made his way, attended by a large number of the rebels, who saw that he did not escape, to Rotherhithe; and then, taking a boat, he was rowed over to the opposite side of the Thames, in the direction of the Tower stairs.




CHAPTER XLI.

THE TOWER OF LONDON IN 1381—SIR JOHN NEWTON'S VISIT—
THE KING PROMISES TO MEET HIS FAITHFUL COMMONS.

"We needs must do what force will have us do."

Richard II.

HE Tower, which Julius Cæsar built to keep the Londoners in check, had been added to from time to time until it became a fortress of the first magnitude. Jealously as the citizens eyed the growth of the building, they had been unable to prevent it, and at the time of which I am now speaking it was both a curb upon the city's mouth and a protection to it from foreign or domestic enemies. He who held the Tower commanded London; and while the Tower was held for London, there was no entrance to her except for friends.

When the peace of Bretigni was signed, the late King Edward held his court there, and in the grand banquetting-hall on the south side of the keep entertained the English and French nobles in celebration of the peace. Little alteration had been made in the structure or extent of the castle since that time. It consisted of the keep, called Julius Cæsar's Tower (the White Tower), a magnificent stone edifice built on the site of Cæsar's Tower, by Gundulph, Bishop of Rochester, by order of William the Conqueror. This tower is 116 feet long and 96 wide, with embattled ramparts 92 feet from the ground. At each corner a turret, designed for observations, rises some feet higher into the air, and on the east side there is a considerable bow, adding to the roominess and beauty of the whole. The walls of the basement

are 18 feet in thickness, presenting an insuperable resistance to any engines of war.

In this tower is a chapel dedicated to God and St. John, the council chamber, some of the royal apartments, and in the basement a long series of doleful prisons.

The large banqueting-hall in which King Edward feasted his nobles lies to the south of the White Tower; and south-west of this, again, are the tower guarding the entrance to the main courtyard (the Bloody Tower) and St. Thomas's Tower.

St. Thomas's Tower faces the river, and is that which commands the approach in this direction, and underneath are the stairs by which persons are wont to arrive at the Tower from the River Thames. Westward of it is a line of fortifications, ending in the Byward Tower, which guards the first gate within the drawbridge spanning the moat that environs the whole castle. On the north-western side the tower called Robert the Devil's Tower and the tower now called the Beauchamp, after the Earl of Warwick who was confined there in 1397, connect the fortified inner wall; while the Flint, Bowyer's, and Martin Towers do the like on the northern side. To the eastward the chain is completed by the Constable, Broad Arrow, and Salt Towers; and outside all of these an embattled wall of stout proportions is reared, to protect the inner edge of the moat. The Lanthorn Tower, lying to the south-east of the banqueting-hall, and the Well and Cradle Towers, to the eastward of the Lanthorn Tower, complete the list of the principal fortifications, which spread themselves over a wide area. Besides the chapel dedicated to St. John, in the White Tower, is another church, dedicated to St. Peter ad Vincula. It stands to the eastward of Robert the Devil's Tower, upon the open space or green which is the main courtyard in the place.

King Stephen appears to have been the first king who made this citadel a royal residence, when in the year 1140 he withdrew within its protection, and kept Whitsuntide there. It was besieged by the Londoners in the course of the troubles which followed, but successfully defended by Geoffrey de Mandeville, who changed sides, and held it for the Empress Ma-

tilda. Stephen recovered it ultimately, and kept it until his death.

Henry II., his successor, does not seem to have used the Tower much, preferring his castles at Windsor and Plesshey to its gloomy precincts; but John, who, as prince, took it from Longchamp, his brother's chancellor, and kept it until Richard's return home, seems to have been frequently compelled to take up his abode within it. At the time of the troubles the Tower was besieged, though in vain; but was surrendered to Prince Louis, the Dauphin, whom the barons invited over to rid them of the wicked tyrant who "no faith kept," but did very grievously.

Henry III. lived much of his time in the Tower, and during his reign spent vast sums of money in strengthening the works and beautifying the dwelling-house part of it. While the barons' wars lasted, Henry tried in vain to keep his stronghold. The Earl of Leicester, through the treachery of some within the place, contrived in the forty-seventh year of the king's reign to get into it, and caught the king in his own trap. The barons held the fortress till the battle of Evesham, in 1265; after which, though once again besieged, it did not pass out of the king's hands.

Edward I. added greatly to the strength of the Tower, widening the ditch, and building strong outer works to protect the weak points; but he seldom dwelt there. His son kept court there when the queen and Mortimer rose against him, and he fled thence into the west, when the rebel arms proved too much for him. Edward III., who spent much of his youth in the Tower, went thence to Nottingham, in 1330, when he crushed the power of Mortimer by seizing him in the castle, and sent him prisoner to the Tower of London, to be kept there till his death upon the gallows. King Edward repeatedly held his court here, and seems to have greatly delighted in the grimness of its strength, which under his management rendered it proof against all comers. Besides the Counts of Eu and Tankerville, and a host of noble persons, Edward confined there the Kings of Scotland and France, both of whom were prisoners to him at the same time. Charles of Blois, Duke of Brittany, and Sir John de Vienne, the defender of Calais and of

whom we know somewhat in respect of his descent on Winchelsea, were also imprisoned here ; and here it was that, as already mentioned, King Edward entertained his own and the foreign nobles after the peace of Bretigni was signed.

This was the place to which King Richard withdrew for safety when the aspect of the rebellion now commencing rendered Windsor an unsafe retreat, and this was the place to which Sir John Newton, the unwilling ambassador from Wat Tyler, was being rowed on his hardy errand, about nine o'clock in the morning on the eve of Corpus Christi.

The boat was steered straight for the stairs under St. Thomas's Tower, and, impelled by the strokes of four sturdy rowers, rapidly approached its goal. As soon as it came within hail, the sentinels, who had watched it from the point of departure, and half suspected whence it came, challenged the occupants, demanding to know their names and their business.

Sir John Newton, rising in the after-part of the boat, while the rowers rested on their oars, shouted that he was a friend to the king, and craved permission to see him, adding that he was Sir John Newton, late governor of his Majesty's castle of Rochester.

One of the men left the castle wall to carry this message to the officer of the guard, whilst his comrades, with bows bent and quarrels placed, ordered the boat to keep its distance until his Majesty's pleasure should be known.

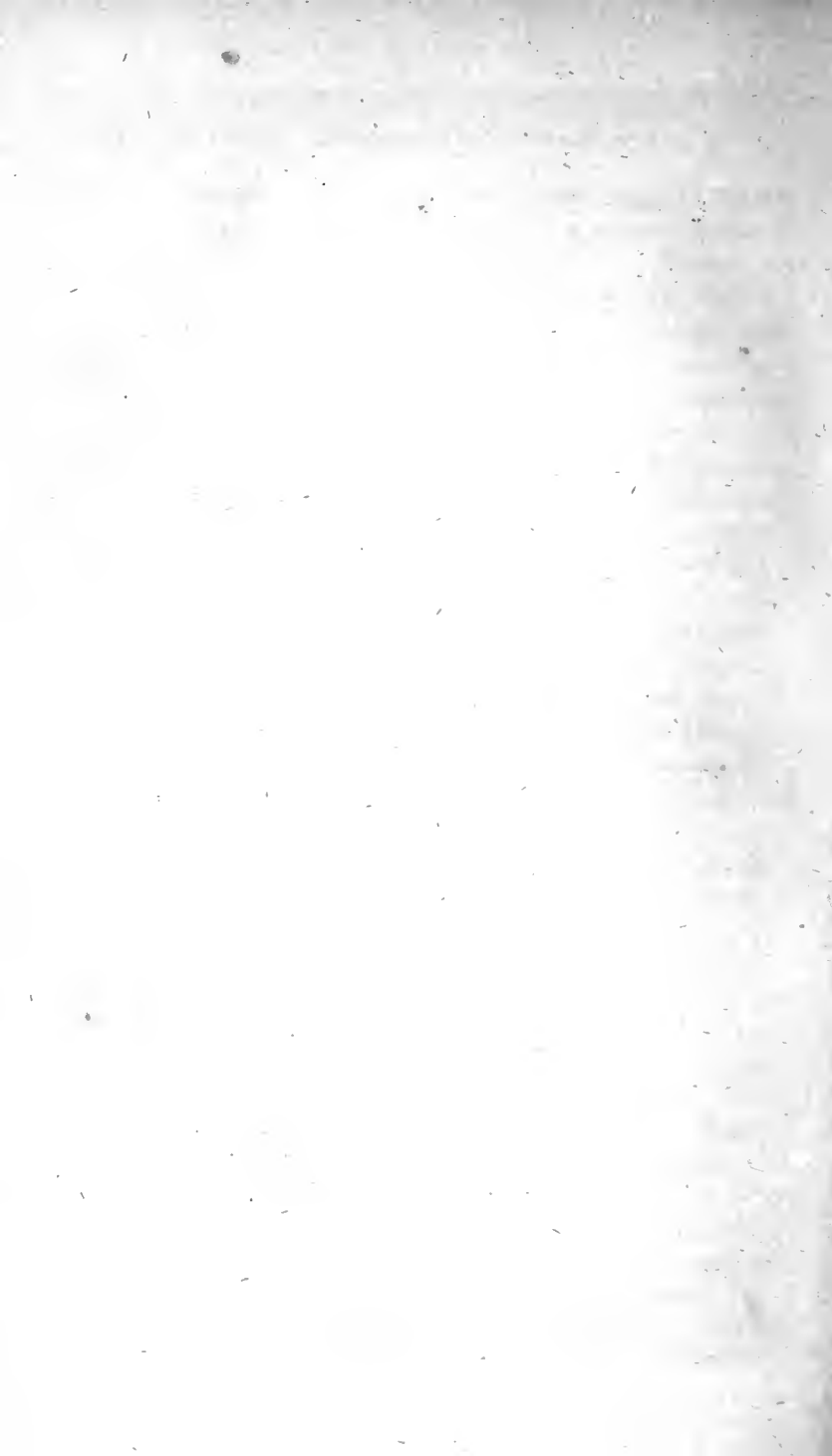
In a few minutes the soldier returned, accompanied by an officer of the king's household, who repeating the challenge, and receiving the same reply as was given before, bade Sir John come to the steps, saying that the king had expressed his willingness to grant an interview.

A few strokes of the oars, and the boat neared the prescribed place. A short delay, caused by the opening of the massive gates which guarded the entrance on the river side of the Tower, and the boat shot into the little dock, at the end of which were the stairs leading to the fortress.

The gates, which had been opened to admit the boat, were now closed by machinery working from above, and the crew being



SIR JOHN NEWTON ARRIVES AT THE RIVER POSTERN OF THE TOWER AS
AMBASSADOR FROM THE REBELS.



ordered to remain where they were, Sir John was received by the officer who had hailed him from above, and conducted to the king's chamber, adjoining the great hall.

In this handsome room, which Henry III. had been at such pains to embellish, and which was curiously carved all over its vaulted roof with the utmost skill the time had afforded, and ornamented as to the walls with carefully-wrought paintings of the history of Antiochus, Sir John Newton found the young king his master. With him were the Earl of Kent and Sir John Holland, his maternal uncles ; the Earls of Salisbury, Warwick, and Suffolk ; Simon de Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury ; Sir Robert Hales, the Prior of St. John ; Sir Robert de Namur, the Lord de Vertain, William Walworth, Lord Mayor of London ; my master, John Philpot, and several of the principal citizens.

The king was dressed in a rich coat of crimson velvet and white silk, with hanging sleeves, finished at the wrists with the finest lace. His breeches were of white camlet, bound at the knees with broad blue ribbon ; his stockings were of fine white silk ; while his feet were encased in shoes of red leather, pointed at the toes, and having a peak which was fastened to the knee by a delicate chain of finely-wrought silver. He wore no other arms than a dagger, the handle of which was richly studded with jewels, that had once belonged to King John of France.

The archbishop, who had just been celebrating the Mass, was yet attired in the robes he had worn in the chapel, while the lords of the retinue, in view of the troubled times, which might necessitate their action at the shortest notice, were all more or less heavily armed.

Sir John Newton, conducted by the officer who met him at St. Thomas's Tower, advanced with abashed countenance to the upper end of the apartment, and throwing himself on his knees at the king's feet, besought his Majesty's pardon for the message he had brought.

"My much-redoubted lord," said he, "do not be displeased with me on account of the message I am about to deliver to you ; for, my dear lord, it is through force alone that I am come hither."

The faithfulness and loyalty of Sir John Newton were too well known to all present to allow of this statement being a matter of doubt.

The king raised his servant with his right hand, and said kindly in a gentle, reassuring tone, "By no means, Sir John: tell us what you are charged with. We hold you already excused for the office;" and Sir John, satisfied on this head, proceeded with the business he had in hand.

"My most beloved lord, the commons of your realm have sent me to you to entreat you will come and speak with them on Blackheath. They wish to have no one but yourself; and you need not fear for your person, for they will not do you the least harm. They always have respected and will always respect you as their king, but they will tell you many things, which, they say, it is highly necessary you should hear, with which, however, they have not empowered me to acquaint you. But, dear lord, have the goodness to give me such an answer as may satisfy them, and that they may be convinced I have really been in your presence, for they have my children as hostages for my return, whom they will assuredly put to death if I do not go back."

"Rest satisfied, Sir John," answered the king, "you shall speedily have an answer;" and directing the knight to withdraw while a council should be held with the ministers, Richard rose from his seat, and took his place at the council board.

The deliberations of the council were not over-long. The facts which they had to consider were few, but momentous. The rebels — sixty thousand strong — were at Blackheath, demanding to speak with the king. The king was in the Tower, which might possibly be defended if attacked, but he had not sufficient force at hand to take the initiative by falling upon the rebels. The condition of affairs had been communicated to the chief barons throughout the country, who, if time only could be gained, would not fail to hasten to the relief of the metropolis. Time *must* be gained. The king had better agree to grant the request made to him, and while delay might be made in a variety of ways, the succours might be urged forward from the country. After a brief debate, the

opinion of the council was taken in favour of the interview, and orders were accordingly given to recall Sir John Newton.

"We have agreed, Sir John, to entertain the petition of our loving commons," said Richard when the knight returned, "and will grant their request upon the morrow. Bid them be ready to speak with us an hour before noon on Blackheath."

"Thanks, most gracious sovereign, for this gentle answer to men who deserve far otherwise," said Sir John. "I will, with your permission, get me back at once with the message, and release my dearest children and my anxieties for them."

"Do so, my friend," said the king. "God speed you, and give you a more fitting office!"

"Amen, with all my heart!" returned the other, and with further protestations of gratitude he left the presence.

Outside the royal chamber the officer was waiting to conduct the envoy back to his boat, the occupants of which had not been suffered to land, lest they might spy out the approaches to the fortress.

"I trust you are well prepared here in case of an assault," said Sir John Newton to his companion, as they walked towards St. Thomas's Tower.

"Fairly," replied the officer, "but we want more men. There are not enough to man all the towers at once. Is it likely those wretches will attempt it, think you?"

"Nay, I know not," said Sir John, "but their blood is up, and who can tell what such desperate varlets will not dare when they have roused themselves as these have done? Would I could think they dared not! I doubt but they will."

"The interview with his Majesty may work something," said the officer.

"Perhaps," answered his companion, shrugging his shoulders; "but, in the nature of things, that cannot settle such matters as are now agitated. The rebellion will not be put down by a few fair words."

The pair now reached the head of the flight of steps under St. Thomas's Tower, and, descending, found the boat with its

crew in the little dock at the bottom. Shaking hands warmly with the officer, and saying he trusted soon to see him again under more favourable circumstances, Sir John Newton stepped into the boat, and when all was ready, the water-gates were slowly opened, the boat's head was shoved off, and in another minute the little bark shot out from its dismal prison into the broad stream. The rowers applied themselves vigorously to their work, so that in less than an hour the party had reached the spot on the opposite side of the Thames, where a large number of rebels stood awaiting its return, eager to hear the result of the embassy.

As soon as Sir John Newton landed, he was surrounded by a crowd of half-clad, hungry-looking savages, who demanded if the king would come to see them, and receiving an answer in the affirmative, they danced about in a wild fashion, whooping and screaming like so many wild beasts. Accompanied by this strange escort, the knight arrived at Wat Tyler's tent, and seeking admission, which was at once granted, entered into the presence of the rebel chief.

"Well, Newton," said the labourer to the knight, "what says King Richard?"

"His Majesty sends greeting to his loving commons, and will grant their request for an interview on the morrow, an hour before noon."

"A good king, Master Ball," said Tyler, turning to that hot-headed ecclesiastic, who stood near him—"a good fellow, I vow. Here, Newton, man—drink to his health; nay, 't is good wine, I promise you."

So thought poor Sir John, no doubt, for he well knew it for his own property, stolen when his castle of Rochester was taken and ransacked of all that it contained. He took the flagon offered him by Tyler, and was about to drink, when a ruffian who was by tilted it up, so that the contents ran all over Sir John's beard and doublet, at which a roar of brutal merriment was raised by all in the tent. Keeping his temper as well as he could, the knight begged leave to retire, and shortly afterwards the promise

of Tyler that if a favourable answer were procured from the king, Sir John Newton "and his brats" should be released from custody, was faithfully fulfilled.

That same evening Sir John and his three children came to London, and were received for refuge in the Tower.



CHAPTER XLII.

THE KING'S INTERVIEW WITH THE COMMONS—"ON TO LONDON!"
—THE CITY THREATENED WITH A SIEGE—A VAIN ATTEMPT
TO REMOVE ALICE TO THE CONVENT AT SHEEN—PREPARA-
TIONS FOR DEFENCE.

"And after all the rascal many ran,
Heaped together in rude rablement."

Faerie Queene.



ON Corpus Christi Day the king heard mass in the Tower with all his lords, and then disposed himself to keep his promise to the rebels.

It was not without many a remonstrance from the Council that Richard addressed himself to his task. There were those who tried to persuade him that he need not keep faith with

traitors, especially as his friends were hourly gaining strength and in a short time would be numerous enough to enable him to fall upon the insurgents and drive them away. But the king would not heed them, and gave orders for the instant departure of his suite from the Tower.

The royal barge was manned, and furnished with an additional

body of archers, who were designed to protect the king in the event of an attack. Four other barges, laden with as many men as possible, who, under cover of being part of the king's retinue, were so many more armed men in case of need, waited upon his Majesty.

Richard was attired apparently as usual, in a dress resembling that in which he had received Sir John Newton; but underneath the velvet outer coat he wore a shirt of fine mail, proof against any missiles which might be cast at him; and his head was protected by a light steel bacinet, surmounted by a small coronet. The nobles who accompanied him were for the most part fully armed, though, like the king, they concealed the fact as much as possible, in order not to awaken distrust in the minds of the people. The archers were, of course, equipped for service, and in the bottom of the boat, covered over with cloths and flags, was a goodly store of battle-axes, hacking swords, pikes, and other weapons, conveniently ready to hand.

The royal barge contained, besides the king, the Earls of Salisbury, Warwick, and Suffolk, Sir Robert Hales, Sir John Holland, William Walworth, the Lord Mayor, and many more. Master Philpot, with Sir Robert Knollys, Sir Perducas d'Albrecht, and others, were in the second barge, wherein, as in attendance upon my master, I was also suffered to enter. Archdale had been left at home to see to the house and to concert with old Philip Aubert and Peter Wall some good means of defence, in case it should become necessary to stand a siege there. Will Allein and Oswald Barnes were similarly occupied at their own homes, for fear had come upon all the city, and every one was looking to his bars and bolts. The foreign merchants were banding together, knowing that they would be amongst the first objects of unreasoning popular violence. The Hanse merchants had already fortified their Guildhall in Bishopsgate; the Genoese, mindful of the late brutal murder of one of their number, for which John de Kyrkeby suffered death, had done the like by theirs; the Flemings in Candlewick Street, and their countryman, John of Ypres, had also laid in a great store of arms, and provided themselves with stout

beams to keep the doors and lower windows of their houses. The masters and wardens of the various guilds were arranging as best they might for the safe bestowal of their property, arming their servants, or such of them as could be trusted, and making all ready against the coming storm. London looked like a city about to be besieged, and the Londoners knew they had foes within as well as without the city, whom it would be necessary to watch.

Such was the condition of things in London when King Richard, attended as I have endeavoured to describe, left the Tower to meet the rebels on Blackheath.

Favoured by the falling tide, and impelled by the sturdy strokes of sixteen strong rowers, the king's barge moved swiftly down the river. Upon a large pole, fixed in the centre of the after-stage, which extended over about half of the entire barge, forming a cabin for the king's use, was hoisted the royal banner of England. The pennon of St. George fluttered from a small mast forward, and the outer woodwork of the boat was covered over with richly embroidered cloth. Upon the after-stage King Richard and his nobles stood, meditating as the vessel glided on upon the strange nature of the errand on which they were going. The manor of Rotherhithe, with its thickly-wooded park, was soon left behind, and in the course of another half-hour's pull the town of Greenwich was descried, gaily bedecked with pennons as if for some great public rejoicing, and towards the landing-place there the king's barge was now steered.

As she approached the bank a great multitude of people, numbering upwards of ten thousand, a detachment from the main body which lay at Blackheath, rushed forward to receive her, setting up "such shouts and cries as if all the devils in hell had been of their company," dancing so fantastically, and making such horrible gestures, that the king's friends were afraid to let him land.

"What do you think, my lord of Warwick," said the king, turning to that nobleman, "as to the propriety of landing?"

"Indeed, your Highness were over-hardy to venture," replied the

Earl; "the people look like so many savages, and certainly they behave as such. It is not safe for your Highness to go. I pray you suffer me and one or two more to land and hear these people's business, rather than you should risk the possibility of coming to any harm."

"You are too careful for me and too careless of yourself," answered Richard; "do you not know that they have vowed vengeance against all my nobles, while for me they have condescended to say I shall be king over them after they have slain my friends? I would not for my crown suffer you to land."

"Then I pray your Highness to give up the project," said the Earl of Warwick. "Believe me, it is not safe nor right for you to go."

"I am rather of your way of thinking too," said Richard, "so far as landing is concerned; but I have made a promise to speak with these people, and though they be traitors, I must keep my word to them."

"I pray you ask the advice of the rest of your servants whether my counsel is not sound," said the earl, who meanwhile cried to the man who was steering, "Steady, helmsman! Keep her off! keep her off!" and the barge-head, which had been turned straight for the shore, was suffered to fall off again, though still within hailing distance.

The people, seeing the change in the boat's course, uttered fresh shrieks mingled of rage and disappointment, and called to the steersman to bring the vessel in. A short conference between the king and his advisers ended in the resolution not to land, for as the Prior of St. John, Sir Robert Hales, said, it would be folly for the king to trust himself among creatures who were devoid of reason; so, being within speaking distance, Richard advanced to the side-rail nearest to the shore, and himself inquired,

"What do ye wish for, my friends? I am come hither to hear what you have to say."

"We wish thee to land," cried a number of voices. "Come on shore, and we will tell thee our wants."

But the fierce looks of these unkempt, toil-begrimed workpeople

did not tempt the king to depart from the course he had prescribed for himself. The Earl of Salisbury advanced to the side, and answered for the king—

“Gentlemen, you are not properly dressed nor in a fit condition for the king to talk with you.”

But Richard added, “Send off some of your fellows in a boat, and I will hearken to what you have to say.”

The royal barge was kept out farther into the stream, and her head put towards London, in case the rebels should attempt to seize her, but no such attempt was made. A small punt, containing some eight or ten persons, put off from Greenwich and speedily boarded the king. A burly fellow, whose trade was that of a mason, and who called himself Jack Straw, climbed up the side of the barge on to the after-stage, and making involuntary obeisance when he found himself in the king’s presence, stated that he had come in the name of his brethren to invite the king to meet them according to his promise.

“What is ’t you want, my man?” (“Besides a good washing?” added Walworth aside) said the king.

“The first demand we have,” replied the man, doggedly, for he perceived himself to be the subject for mirth which he did not understand, “is for the head of John Gaunt, who calls himself Duke of Lancaster; then we must have the head of Simon Sudbury, the false chancery; this man’s head,” pointing to Sir Robert Hales; “the heads of Courtney, Bishop of London; Belknap, your chief justice; the traitor Ralph Ferrers, and the tyrant of your Exchequer, together with that of the villain Legge, who seized a freeborn man and would have made him a slave.”

“A bold varlet!” said the king, frowning, while the bystanders could scarcely keep their hands off the fellow. “Is this what you had to tell me, after all? What more?”

“Nothing till that’s granted,” answered the man, who, noticing that he was extraordinarily near destruction from the hands of those about him, thought fit to add that if any harm came to him not one of their party would get back to London, and the strong probability of this statement being true alone saved him from

being flung at once into the river. The king commanded himself sufficiently to say that he would overlook the insolence of the speech which had been made to him on condition it was not repeated, and having added that he would endeavour to meet any reasonable requests properly made, turned away from the messenger, who was forthwith ordered to quit the barge.

When the punt with the messengers from the rebels again touched the shore, and Jack Straw gave an account of his reception on board the king's barge, an angry cry arose from the crowd, and a movement was made towards the margin of the river, where were lying the few boats that the place boasted.

It was the evident intention of the rebels to get possession of the royal barge, and in the temper they showed through the medium of their ambassadors, it was quite clear what their conduct would be towards those of the noblemen whom they chose to call their enemies, and some of whom, as the Prior of St. John's, were actually on board.

As there could not be any doubt that mischief was their bent, and not compliance with the gracious offer which the king had made that he would listen to any reasonable requests, it was deemed imprudent to wait for the coming of the boat. The Earl of Warwick ordered the archers to stand by with their bows and every one to have his weapons ready, while he also directed the helmsman to keep over towards the Essex side of the river on his way back to London.

The royal party proceeded on its passage to the Tower, followed by the screams of the infuriated people, who ran along the banks shouting, "On to London! to London! Down with the lords!" until the barges had swept out of earshot. King Richard returned with a heavy heart to the Tower, for it was evident that things would be much worse before they would be better.

At the Tower he found a number of fresh arrivals, gentlemen who had hurried into town as soon as they heard of the king's danger, and were there to offer their arms and sinews to defend him against his rebellious subjects.

The news from the eastern counties was as bad as could be. The Essex and Cambridge men had marched to St. Albans, taken possession of the town, and compelled the abbot to free all his villeins, besides giving the army great store of arms, money, and food. Another body had ravaged the archbishop's estate at Lambeth, destroying the house, burning the books and registers, and putting his servants to flight. A third body had advanced as far as the manor of Highbury, two miles on the north side of London, belonging to the Prior of St. John of Jerusalem (Sir Robert Hales), and destroyed it utterly with fire.

By three o'clock in the day, the Kentish rebels, who broke up from Blackheath on the withdrawal of the king, had arrived in the suburb of Southwark. On their way they had visited the houses of all who had anything whatever to do with the law, burned them with all that they contained, and cut off the heads of the unfortunate owners.

Meantime within the city, William Walworth, the mayor, who had foreseen the chance of an attack upon the bridge, had, as already mentioned, directed the men of Bridge Ward to be specially summoned for the defence of the approaches. He himself, clad in complete armour, saw to the due security of the draw-bridge which cut the stone bridge in two, and without which there could be no crossing. He was here and there, visiting the different posts, riding with his attendant aldermen from quarter to quarter, exhorting the people to prevent the great city falling into rebellious hands. The houses of all the men of substance were fortified, and there seemed every disposition on the part of the better class of citizens to resist aggression to the uttermost. But among the more numerous folk of the lower class there was a very different feeling. These men sympathised with those outside, and not only forbore to assist the mayor in the discharge of his duty, but loudly murmured at the measures which were being taken to keep the peace. "Why will you refuse admittance to these honest men? They are our friends, and what they are doing is for our good!" cried the people as the magistrates rode by. The great respect they had for Walworth, and still greater

for Master Philpot, who was known to be their warm friend in all things legitimate, and who was now in attendance on the mayor, restrained them from using more urgent remonstrances in their presence; but as soon as their little party had disappeared, the people, exhorted to it by those who should have known better, but who thought to bring themselves into a prominent place which else they would never have attained, ran from street to street, uttering seditious cries, removing the chains which had been slung across the ends of streets, and in some cases disarming the guard appointed to watch them.

By six o'clock in the evening it was evident that the gates could not be kept much longer against the excited crowds who thronged them from within and without, demanding that they should be opened for the admission of the true commons of England. Intimation of the state of things was sent to the king in the Tower, and he gave the lord mayor his advice (for the king could not command in the city) to open the gates after the lapse of a little longer time, in the hope of appeasing the multitude by the concession.

I had made a vain attempt to convey Alice, for whom alone I entertained the slightest fear, to safe keeping outside the walls. It was not without the most persistent entreaty that she could be induced to leave her father, preferring, as she said, to share his fate, than to feel he was in danger while she was in safe keeping. Master Philpot's wishes, added to my prayers, at length wrung an unwilling consent from her. Attended by one of her maidens, we got her into the whirlicote which had been provided, and with an escort of twelve men besides myself, we set off with the intention of reaching the convent at Sheen, where Master Philpot had a friend in the prioress, and where we supposed our dear charge would be free from harm. But on arriving at Temple Bar on our way thither, we learned that the Essex rebels had spread themselves over the district we intended to visit, and were in possession of all the roads, so that it was more dangerous to proceed than to turn back. It was not without much misgiving and unwillingness that I decided upon returning. People who had come in

from the country confirmed the information given to us at the Bar, and drew so gloomy a picture of the state of things outside that we were fain to retrace our steps and give up the attempt. Alice was certainly not displeased, and gladly accepted the alternative which presented itself, of standing a siege in her father's house, to quitting him in the hour of trial. The house was, indeed, well fortified, and, under the direction of Archdale, had been so strengthened that an entrance, in spite of determined defenders—and those it had—was almost hopeless, unless the besiegers should use fire. The name, too, of Master Philpot was a great protection in itself—at least so far as the commons in London were concerned; and we hoped against hope, now that we had determined to remain, that no violence would be attempted upon the city at all.

By seven o'clock in the evening it was found to be impossible to keep the insurgents at bay any longer. The drawbridge on London Bridge was ordered to be lowered, and in rushed the people pell-mell, falling over each other in their eagerness to get into the city.

It having been thus determined to yield to the storm in hope of ultimately saving London, all those who had anything to defend—houses or family to protect—withdrew to their homes, and waited in heaviness and anxiety for what might come. Nor were they kept long in suspense. In spite of the pompous announcement put forth by the rebel chiefs that no pillaging should be allowed, and that theft would be punished with instant death, it was soon made apparent how little control the leaders had over their followers in this respect, and how that it is as difficult to restrain a thief from following his inclinations for thieving as it is to make a silken purse out of a sow's ear. Perhaps the poor men were too hungry to be nice, and eating suggested drinking, and drinking suggested how slavish and base a thing it is to pay; but it is certain the first act of the commons who had come up from the country to remove bad ministers and to set matters generally right in the metropolis, was to ransack the cook-shops in East Cheap, empty the stores of the provision merchants, and drain

every cellar of wine that came to their hand. This being done, and large quantities of liquor over and above what were necessary having been consumed, the rebels ran through the streets shouting and yelling, some of them fantastically dressed in garments which they had stripped from luckless wights who were unfortunate enough to be out, others carrying on their heads the broom or brush which they had taken from the sign-poles of the taverners' houses. Some were lying harmless in the kennels, unconscious of their patriotism or of the cause for which they were in arms; but the spirit of mischief possessed the greater part of them, who were ready for any desperate enterprise their leaders might think proper to undertake.

So night closed in upon London. Every house a fortress, and every soul a watcher—if I except, perhaps, old Peter Wall, who observed, like a philosopher as he was, that having done all he could towards the defence of the house, he thought he might as well be murdered sleeping as awake, if murder was to come at all, and he retired to his bed accordingly.

The rest of us divided ourselves into two watches, the one to keep the outer court, the other to guard the house itself; and although several considerations would have made me prefer to be in the latter division, I cheerfully acquiesced in the arrangements which placed me in the outer guard. Armed from head to foot, as if we had to fight John Mercer over again, and having close at hand a plentiful supply of additional weapons, we took up our station in the courtyard within the great gates which fronted Fenchurch Street. My accoutrements, from which the others differed only in a slight degree, consisted of a strong steel cap fitting closely to the head, and having a hanging guard of steel plates sewn on leather to protect the neck. A plain cuirass—the same that I had worn in the French campaign—with backplate and shoulder-covers, steel-jointed vambraces, and leather gauntlets guarded at the back of the hand with small iron scales, completed the upper armour. Slight cuissarts for the thighs were all the armour I had on my legs, though stout leathern buskins and shoes of the same afforded as much protection below as I was likely to

require. Across my right shoulder was the blue silk sash which Alice had given me on my last birthday, and in it was slung a trenchant, splendid sword, which Sir Hugh Calverley had given me after the escape from Troyes. The dagger which has been so often mentioned as the same I won at Smithfield was in my belt, and, as a useful sort of weapon at close quarters, I carried in my hand an iron-headed mace, having fluted sides — a persuasive sort of thing much used by the fighting clergy, who, being forbidden by the Church to shed blood, do not object to dashing in a foe-man's head with a weapon of this kind. The men of my company had crossbows with iron bolts, axe-headed spears, and swords. We were sixteen in number, and rather wished than otherwise that the rebels would try whether we were enough to hold the gate.

Nothing of any moment occurred up to curfew time. We heard the shouts of the multitude in a westerly direction, and saw a ruddy glow in the sky, which we rightly conjectured was not caused solely by the midsummer sunset; but it was plain that the object of the rebels was not as yet to attack the eastern quarter. At nine o'clock a loud knocking at the great gate attracted our attention, and going thither to ascertain the cause, I found a man, whose disguising cloak drawn aside showed him to be dressed in the royal livery, and who demanded in the king's name to have instant speech with Master Philpot.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE PRIOR OF ST. JOHN SENDS A MESSAGE INTO THE CITY — BURNING OF THE SAVOY—SACK OF THE TEMPLE.

“Savoy semely sette
heu! funditus igne cadebat,
Arcadon there they bett,
et eos virtute premebat,
Deth was ther dewe dett
qui captum quisque ferebat.

Song made in the year 1381.



THE messenger to whom I gave admittance was no other than the officer of the guard who had waited on Sir John Newton when he visited the king in the capacity of Wat Tyler's ambassador. The message, which was from the king himself, was to be delivered to none but Master Philpot, and to Master Philpot accordingly the gentleman was conducted.

The words of the message were few but significant. The Prior of St. John had sent one of his men to his Majesty in the Tower, to acquaint him that the rebels had begun an attack upon the Temple, that there were not enough men in the place, including the men of law, to hold it, and to beg for that immediate assistance from the king without which the most direful mischief could not be prevented. The king's commentary upon the prior's message was that not a man could be spared from the Tower, the garrison of which was all too small; and the utmost he could do was to send the message into the city, hoping that the magistrates there might be able to do something. The messenger had been unable to reach the lord mayor, in consequence of the mob who possessed the streets; so, failing him, he had come on to Master Philpot, as being the likeliest man to furnish the needful help.

If the king was unable to spare men from the Tower garrison, much less could Master Philpot spare them from the slender guard which kept his house. The strength of the ward was already insufficient for its own defence, and it was impossible to organise a sufficient force for the relief of any one beleaguered place. Sad as it might seem, the Temple must be left to its fate, and such was the substance of the communication which Master Philpot made to the prior's messenger.

William Walworth, the lord mayor, had been summoned to a council in the Tower, where it was debated whether to issue forth at once with such troops as were available, and fall on the rebels ere they did more harm; or whether, this being a risky policy, it would be better not to give the enemy a chance of getting the king into their power by any single blow, and to wait, therefore, in stronghold till an attack should be made, by which time the succours that were being collected in the northern and western counties might arrive to the king's assistance. The latter course was resolved upon, and King Richard and his court stayed that night in the Tower.

For the Prior of St. John and the Templars, we soon learned what had befallen them. Before my watch, which was the first, was out, a wounded man with clothes upon which fire had passed, hatless, and having blood streaming from two large cuts on the head, presented himself at our house and begged for admission. His dress betokened him a gentleman, and the authority with which, in spite of his hurry, he spoke to the gatekeeper, no less showed him to be one accustomed to command. While the porter questioned him as to his name and business, I heard my own name mentioned by the stranger, and thinking I recognised the speaker's voice, ran to the gate, and saw, standing without in the street, no other than Arthur Trewin.

A minute sufficed to open the gate, admit my friend, and make all fast again. Poor Arthur, the same as I had seen him a few hours before, yet changed: his hair clotted and his clothes bedabbled with blood, his cheeks pale as death, his step unsteady, and his whole body faint. Excitement sustained him till he got

within the gate, and then overstrained nature gave way, and he fell exhausted into my arms.

The utmost care which kind and gentle woman could bestow was given to Arthur, so that between old Margaret's surgery—which for wounds and bruises was as efficacious as that of more pretentious professors—and Alice's tender nursing, the poor fellow revived sufficiently in the course of a couple of hours to be able to tell us the story of his mishap, and his story was that of the Templars generally.

The mob had not failed upon their entry into the city immediately to plunder the taverns and the cooks' shops; and having satisfied the cravings of hunger, they proceeded to run into excess. They broke into all cellars where wine was stored, burst the casks, and ladled out their contents, drinking the wine as though it had been no more potent than water. Infuriated by drink, they staggered about, their few brains just quick enough to make them understand how to do any brutal act; so that when some hardy rebel proposed that Duke John's palace should be burned, there was a ready response to the proposal from ten thousand drunken throats.

"Down with all traitors!" "Death to Duke John!" "King Richard and the true Commons!" were the cries sent up to frighten the birds who winged their evening flight homeward; and wary owls, who came out that night to seek their 'customed mice in the gardens of Holborn and the Strand, saw a sight to ruffle even the composure of owls, and to send those wise birds farther afield in pursuit of their provender.

From London Bridge to St. Paul's, and from St. Paul's down Ludgate to Fleet Street, the half-maddened people surged like an eygre on a river, and flowed through Temple Bar, which was shut in vain before them, streamlets of them draining off down side streets by the way, either incapacitated through drink, or bent on a bloody mission to the house of some Fleming or other foreign merchant who chanced to live near their line of march; and so the main body of them came to the palace of the Savoy, a palace unequalled by any in the whole metropolis for the beauty of its architecture and the splendour of its fittings.

The Duke of Lancaster, fortunately for him, was many miles away, serving his country on the Scottish border. His house, never intended to be used as a fortress, was quite unable to stand a siege, even if the servants who were left within it had been able to defend it. Wat Tyler himself directed the performances of his men, Jack Straw and John Ball, the chaplain, acting as his lieutenants. Orders were given that no one, on pain of instant death, should dare to steal aught, or appropriate anything to his own special use. "The cause for which the commons were in arms," the tiler said, "forbad the sin of plundering," and he swore to kill with his own hand the first man who should be found thieving. All gold and silver vessels, of which it was known there were plenty in the house, were to be broken into small pieces and thrown into the Thames; cloths of gold and silver tissue, silk and velvet, were to be torn; rings, jewels, precious stones, were to be bruised in mortars, "that the same mought bee to no use." Proclamation to this effect having been made, the noble palace was instantly assaulted; the porters were killed, the terrified servants put to flight, and the house fired in seven or eight places. The flames leaped forth from windows and doors, licking into the abyss of destruction the yet unscathed portions of the fabric; crash followed crash, as one heavy piece after another yielded to the fire, and fell to the ground in a glory of millions of sparks. The incendiaries yelled their delight as the work of waste went on, their gaunt forms standing out distinctly against the blaze which the burning pile afforded. They looked like devils on the brink of some demon furnace, and danced around it as though they were the spirits of fire.

Not a few fell victims to their own wantonness—some to their own cupidity. The orders of Wat Tyler were rigidly enforced wherever a culprit was found, and several poor fools lay lifeless on the plunder with which they had disgraced the cause of the commons.

One fellow there was who had early made an entrance into the palace, before the fire had gained much on it, and found, in the room which had been the bedchamber of the late King John of

France, when he was a prisoner in England after the campaign of Poitiers, a fine large goblet of silver, tastefully wrought, and having a massive cover of almost equal value with the tankard itself. The man, and a comrade who was with him, having siezed this goblet, determined to keep it, notwithstanding the proclamation of Wat Tyler.

"Who is the tiler that he should stop our liberty, I should like to know?" said one.

"Ah, indeed! These nobles have long enough wrung riches out of us: it's time now to get some of the things back. We're free now, so that no one has a right to stay us. Be quick though; let us hide the mug, lest some of those fellows come and see us and tell tales. Who's to have it?"

"I found it, and I shall keep it," said the first man.

"Give me the lid, then," said the other.

"Get away with you," replied his companion. "There's plenty more stuff to be had for the looking after it." And so saying he put King John's drinking-cup into the folds of his shirt.

The other man was ransacking a cupboard which contained a number of valuable things, with the hope of finding something to reward his valour, when a dense puff of black smoke floated into the room, followed immediately by flame, which was devouring the rafters of the ceiling above. Without any booty, he cleared out to save himself from being burned, his companion in thieving having already made off.

Blinded by the smoke and cinders, he had some difficulty in finding his way out of the burning house. When he reached the street, however, he found the possessor of the goblet standing near Wat Tyler's horse, quietly watching the progress of the fire.

"Halloa, man! I thought you were burned," said he of the goblet.

"No thanks to you that I wasn't," said the other, choking with the smoke. "Have you got that cup, eh?"

"Safe enough, man," answered the fellow, tapping his breast. "Don't talk about it here."

"Give me the lid," said the other.

"Not I, man," replied the first: "I found the thing, and you might have found something else."

"The fire overtook me," said the fellow.

"Worse luck for you, that's all I can say," was the answer.

"You'd better give me the lid," said the disappointed man, rather significantly.

"Why in the foul fiend's name should I?" asked the other. "No, hang me if I do."

"Then you shall rue it," cried his companion, who instantly and in a loud voice accused the thief of stealing, at the same time that he put his hand into the man's bosom and drew forth the cup, holding it up in view of Wat Tyler.

There was no time for formal investigation, had that been the way in which the rebel authorities chose to act; no time for explanation, or recrimination against the would-be thief. Ere the goblet man had time to look round he was seized from behind by three pairs of strong arms, including those of his betrayer, the goblet was again thrust into his shirt front, and he and it were lifted up and hurled headlong into the burning mass before them. How the wretch who thus served him fared afterwards I know not, but it was reported he was one of those thirty-two who "entred a seller of the Savoy, where they dranke so much of sweete wines that they were not able to comê out in time, but were shut in with wood and stones yt mured up the doore, where they were heard crying and calling seven days after, but none came to help them out till they were dead."

Some fellow had procured from the wardrobe of the absent Duke of Lancaster a handsome tabard, or coat of arms, such as noblemen are wont to wear over their armour when going into battle. It was richly embroidered with the duke's device—a falcon—and on the breast was woven with silk and gold thread the heraldic bearings of his house. By way of amusement, while they stood by the palace to make sure that the fire did not go out before it had done its work, the people fixed this tabard on a spear, and planted the spear into the ground to serve as a target; but as the rebels, being unused to weapons, could not manage their

bows deftly enough to pierce the coat fast enough for their hatred of its owner, they pulled it down and trampled it on the ground, stabbing it with their swords as though it contained the body of the duke himself.

With the destruction of the Savoy, Wat Tyler did not consider his duty accomplished. Still was tingling in his ears the speech of the Prior of Bermondsey, which was moreover endorsed by the wisdom of John Ball; and though it went against the grain to do so, he determined to spare the house of the Bishop of Chester, which stood temptingly near; but if through fear of the Divine wrath he agreed to spare the churches and churchmen generally, there were some of both whom nothing would make him overlook, and of these was the Prior of St. John of Jerusalem, and the beautiful Temple which belonged to the Order.

Ball, who still wore his priest's vestments, and acted in the capacity of chaplain to the leaders whenever it pleased those men to pray, mounted on a tub and preached to the people on the sight which they were witnessing in the burning palace. He likened the Savoy to the constitution of the English government, a thing fair to look on and comfortable even to luxury for all those who were permitted to come into it, but a place of oppression and cruelty for all those who, like the true commons, were kept out of it with arms and hirelings. "Whence gat the nobles all this wealth, my masters, which honest Wat Tyler has given to the flames? Was it born with them? Did they any more than you bring riches with them when they leaped into the world? No. These things which they and their fathers before them amassed, were wrung from the toil and labour of English hands, which they enslaved, though they were by nature free. These baubles which they deck themselves with, these costly plates and flagons, these wasteful dresses, are but the overflowings of a wealth which belongs to all of us. Never was it seen, I trow, in Adam's day that one gathered into his own hand the things which God meant for all, and why should it be so now? Neither then were there any lords, nor bishops, nor any taxes (he might as well have said there was no Savoy, or Strand, or John Ball), and why should we suffer

them? My friends, now is your time! now or never! Behave like men, or you will be surely treated like slaves! Let us destroy for ever those bad writings which the lawyers have and do mischief with. Let us punish our oppressors as we have destroyed this house. Let those who have done wrong smart for it, but beware of injuring the innocent. The men who are indeed the servants of God and do His service let us honour, but fail not to strike at those wolves in sheep's clothing who have climbed into the fold and there revel in wantonness and luxury. Robert Hales, who calls himself Prior of St. John, is a bad man. He is the treasurer who makes the taxes. Don't forget him. Simon Sudbury is a wicked man, who calls himself Archbishop of Canterbury. He is intolerably proud and hates us all (Ball probably thought of the steps the primate had thought it right to take against him). He advises the king to do all sorts of tyranny. Don't forget *him*. We are going now to the Temple, to clean it from lawyers, and, if we can find the prior, to burn him in the midst of it."

Having done the best to inflame the minds of the people—his success being marked by the deafening cheers which greeted his words—John Ball descended from the tub, which was his pulpit, and rejoined Wat Tyler and the other leaders.

"To the Temple! to the Temple!" shouted thousands of excited men, and a rush was made along the Strand in the direction of that place.

Lighted by the glare which the burning palace made, the motley crew made its way along the Strand, passing the Bishop of Chester's house, which lay immediately west of Temple Bar, until they came to the Temple itself. Wat Tyler, mounted on a beautiful charger which had been stolen for him in the interest of the commons, rode at the head of the insurgents, attended by his faithful advisers and fomenters of rebellion. The mob had stricken off the heads of some of the Duke of Lancaster's servants, stuck them on spear-ends, and so bore them in the van. The gory faces seemed to grin horribly on the violent deeds which were being done, and in their iron sleep to dream of the vengeance which should be theirs. The mob shouted as it advanced on its way,

drunk with wine and the excitement which came of their entirely new position as masters.

Temple Bar was open to them as before, and soon there thundered at the Temple gate the rough summons of those who would not be refused admission. The military strength within was not great, certainly insufficient to defend it against a host, and the few brethren of the Order then lodged in the place, combined with the students and professors of the law, who had all begirt themselves with other weapons than they were wont to use, were over-matched by the tremendous array which threatened them.

A lull in the din represented the momentary hesitation of the rebels to break so venerable a place as the house of the Templars, and then came the storm. Gates were battered down, and the human tide flowed in. Resistance was vain, worse than useless. Those who struck did so only in the hope of sending some of the ruffians into Hades before them. The men of laws were slain, their books were pulled out of the hutches and burned; even the beautiful church did not escape violence, nor did it afford safety to the miserable wretches who sought refuge in it.

Arthur Trewin, having fought from point to point, succeeded in reaching the river-gate, accompanied by two of his companions. Their pursuers had left them, as less worthy of attention than the wine which was in the prior's cellars. The fugitives were fortunate enough to secure a boat that lay concealed among the rushes which fringed the garden bank, and in this, wounded and weary, they rowed for dear life to the west side of London Bridge.

"My companions," said Arthur, "made, by side streets, for the Tower; I knew where to find a refuge, and, thanks be to God! I managed to reach it."

"Thou art truly welcome to it, lad, as long as it will hold thee," said the kind voice of Master Philpot, who had listened attentively to the tale. "Thou must not exert thyself, but obey implicitly the commands of thy warders here, who will keep thee prisoner till health come to release thee. But tell me, whither were those men bound, think ye, after their work yonder was over?"

"To St. John's Gate, I believe," answered Arthur. "I heard them swear they would not stop till they had made Sir Robert Hales as houseless as the vane on Paul's."

"They've kept their word too," said Archdale, who now entered the room, and overheard the last words that were spoken. "I am this instant returned from Tower Ward, and heard as I came along the roar of these mad devils coming back from the sack of the prior's house in Smithfield. They are assembled by thousands at St. Katharine's, and it is thought they mean to attack the Tower."

"What strength is there in the garrison?" inquired Arthur.

"Six hundred men-at-arms and as many archers," replied Archdale. "Will Allein, Sir Walter Hood's squire, has a company of them, and mighty dissatisfied he is with them, so he says."


"Like enough," said I. "They're just a lot of Gascons and French half-breds, no more fit for work than that bench is. I doubt they'll show fight if the place be attempted; their hearts are no bigger than groat pieces, and they have a marvellously great dread of cold iron."

By this time the night was far advanced. Those of our household who had not to watch retired to their couches, or lay down armed on the settles about the room, whilst the hearts of all remained heavy and full of fear for the evil things which the morrow might bring forth.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A COUNCIL AT WILLIAM WALWORTH'S—SACK OF THE TOWER—
SMITHFIELD—WAT THE TILER MEETS HIS REWARD.

"I lighted down my sword to draw,
I hacked him in pieces sma'."—*Pair Helen.*

HE following morning fully justified the fears entertained on the preceding night. The rebels were in force upon the hill adjoining the Tower, and were clamorous for the king to come out to them, declaring that if he did not so they would come in to him, and they shouted aloud for the heads of those whom they called traitors, the chosen counsellors and friends of the king. In other parts of the city much violence had been done. Foreign merchants, for no other reason than because they were foreigners, were cruelly put to death, their houses burned, their goods plundered. Citizens who were not liked by the commons met a like treatment, and thus Richard Lions, the lapidary of Dowgate, who was introduced to my readers in one of the early chapters of this story, was beheaded at the Standard in Cheap. John of Ypres escaped with a large ransom, which was accepted in lieu of his life, chiefly because of the difficulty there was in approaching his strongly-guarded house in Knight Rider Street. The city was in the hands of the insurgents to do as they chose with it. The authority of the law was confessedly powerless, though secretly steps were being taken to collect a sufficient force to enable the king to hold his own again. Reinforcements to the rebels were flocking up from the country, led by reports of the doings of their brethren in London, but their numbers proved to be a source of weakness to them; they lacked discipline and leaders capable of commanding them.

They had procured reinforcements, however, of a kind that would undoubtedly disregard the proclamation as to forbearance from theft. In their zeal for liberty, being also instigated thereto by the commoner sort of Londoners who had friends in the prison, the rebels attacked and stormed Newgate and set free the prisoners, many of whom were ruffians of the worst dye, fit for any deed of violence, and whetted to the commission of it by the rigour of their punishment. These men acted also in the capacity of guides to the houses of those whom the rebels sought. They were foremost in spoliation and princes in cruelty, and served also as loadstones to draw out from the people qualities like to their own.

The prisons in Westminster were also broken up and the inmates let out, so that there was a pretty collection of skilful hands well practised in villainous arts.

There was one act, however, on the part of the rebels which called forth the strongest reprobation, though as some said it was no worse than the king's men did in 1378, when they violated the sanctuary of St. Peter's Church at Westminster, and slew Robert Hawley in the choir, and captured John Schakel, who had taken refuge there. News came to Robert Legat, chief questmonger of the city, that the rebels, incited by the released felons whose committal he had been instrumental in obtaining, were seeking for him and intended to do him some harm. In great haste he ran from his house through West Cheap, and came to the college of St. Martin le Grand, which Ingelricus and Edwardus founded in 1056, and which William I. confirmed with all its privileges of sanctuary in the second year of his reign.

When the gaol-birds came to his house and found that he was gone, they began to tear the house down, and catching hold of some of the servants, so terrified them that they confessed their master had gone to the sanctuary at St. Martin's.

With many a curse and frightful whoop they turned back, and did not cease running till they reached the door of the church attached to the college. They rushed in, shouting that the traitor should come forth, and they found him crouching down by the altar, to which he clung with the energy of despair. But even

the holy place could not protect the object of the popular fury. A loud cry from the hunters told to those who were without that the fox had been unearthed, and a responsive yell told to the poor wretch at the altar the humour in which his captors were.

In vain a priest who was in the chancel when Legat ran in and claimed protection, stood for a moment between the victim and the sacrificers protesting that the wrath of God would light upon the violators of His sanctuary.

“Stand aside, Master Priest! We would not do thee harm,” said a burly man who looked like a sailor; “but that vermin of the law we must and shall have.”

“You cannot take him from St. Martin’s sanctuary,” said the priest, “which has been a place of refuge for all who came since three centuries past.”

“Sorry it should have protected bad men so long, that’s all I can say. It is a shame to the place to protect things like that,” rejoined the sailor. “Come, stand aside, Master Priest. We mean to have him, and I’m sure St. Martin will be glad to be rid of him. What sort o’ saint can he be that would save a lawyer, I wonder?” And as he spoke the man walked up the steps of the altar, unabashed by the presence and gesture of the priest, who reared his crucifix before his eyes, and warned him as he prized his soul to forbear. He stooped down, and bending his body so as not to touch the priest, caught hold of the cowering quest-monger in his arms, and with a shake and a wrench detached him from his hold.

Deafening shouts of applause greeted the appearance of the sailor with his prey when the unruly band got out into the street again. With gibes and taunts poor Robert Legat was hurried along at a skip and jump pace to the Standard in Cheap, where preparations, not so elaborate perhaps as effectual, were already complete for sending him to his last account. It was vain for him to protest or ask leave to explain. The Newgate men swore he was unjust and took bribes to procure convictions, and the sailor, who had been committed to that prison for some trivial offence,

identified Legat who had prosecuted him with the severe law which awarded the punishment, and as one perfectly convinced told the bystanders the fellow was not fit to live.

Language like this to men who had slain others simply because they could write was more likely to tell against the prisoner than the prisoner's eloquence in his own behalf was likely to avail.

The mob manifested some impatience at the necessary delay that was made, and called upon the executioner to do his work. In another five minutes Robert Legat's head was stuck upon a spear and paraded in front of the rebels as they set off to the house of St. John by Smithfield, which they sacked, fired, and destroyed.

It was for the purpose of devising some plan by which an army might be promptly raised that Master Philpot was sent for in urgent haste to meet the other city magistrates and some of the king's friends in secret conference at the house of William Walworth, the lord mayor.

Archdale and I both begged for leave to accompany our beloved master on his journey through the streets, but he declined to allow more than one of us to go, saying with reason that we must not too greatly reduce the strength of the household. Archdale went, and I remained to watch over the safety of my lady love and that of my wounded friend.

The morning wore away before Master Philpot's return, and then we heard what deeds had been done whilst we had watched in safety and in peace. The leaders of the rebels had summoned the Tower garrison to open the gates and let the commons speak to their king. His Majesty himself had appeared on the walls and asked the people what it was they wanted, but his questions were met by fierce and loud cries that he should come forth; and at length, with the advice of his council, he agreed to do so, appointing Mile End as the place for the conference.

The council at which Master Philpot assisted had agreed to defer any attack upon the people, in order to gain time. Sir Robert Knollys and Sir Perducas d'Albrecht gave their voices in favour of immediate action, not being able to endure the insuffer-

able insolence of such beings. Sir Nicholas Brembre, too, was on the same side.

"The fools are half of them drunk," said he. "They may be killed as easily as flies, and not one in twenty is armed."

"Have we not eight thousand good soldiers in London," observed Sir Robert, "which have been hurried up from the Cinque Ports and other towns? Why not fall to at once and make a meal of these rebels?"

"They are sixty thousand strong," said Master Philpot, "of themselves, and I doubt the commonalty of London too much to dare them to a rising."

"Two days may make a great difference either way," said Walworth. "We may be all dead in that time by the hand of these rascals, or we may have sufficient strength to crush them without hope of their successfully resisting us. I am disposed to wait."

"So am I," chimed in the Earl of Salisbury, who more thoroughly than any there represented the king. "If these men are to be appeased by fair words, and they can be granted good-humouredly what they ask, all will be well; but if we begin what we find ourselves unable to go through with, we shall never recover it: it will be all over with us and our children, and England will be one desert."

The prudent counsel prevailed, and the noblemen present separated, having each promised to lose no opportunity nor relax any effort that might in any way further the king's advantage.

Richard, in conformity with his promise, prepared to quit the Tower for the place of meeting, whither a large number of the people had preceded him. Attended by the Earls of Buckingham, Kent, Warwick, and Oxford, Sir Robert Knollys, the lord mayor, and a small but well-armed guard, he passed out of the gates of the fortress and fared forth to Mile End.

The rebels who had taken their stand on Tower Hill, and had gone forth to Mile End to meet the king, were Essex men, under various leaders not connected directly with the main body excepting as regarded the object for which all were in arms. Their

leaders had even quarrelled with those of the other faction on account of some arrogance on the part of Wat Tyler, who wished to be, and to be treated as, the commander-in-chief of all the insurgents. So there were divisions among them which proved to be of great advantage to the government and of corresponding hurt to the rebels. When the Essex men, therefore, agreed to hear what the king would say to them at Mile End, the Kentish men positively refused to go with them.

Wat Tyler, however, had another object in remaining behind, besides that of showing that he could do without the assistance of the Essex men.

Scarcely had the king quitted the Tower and gone to his trysting-place, attended as above described, than Wat Tyler, with a large body of his men, occupied Tower Hill, vacated by the Essex host, and made his preparations for attacking that fortress.

A short conference took place between Tyler and his council, which led to the despatch of a messenger to summon the garrison. John Budge, a mason, was sent on this duty.

"Go to the gate of the Tower, and thus speak," said Tyler: "The true commons of England have left their homes, their families, and their work, to come and punish the traitors to the people. Some of these traitors are in this Tower. Let them come forth, for have them we will; and if we are forced to come to them, it will be the worse for you who let us."

The mason recited this speech several times till Wat Tyler considered that he knew it, and then trudged off to do his bidding. While he was gone, Tyler made his dispositions in case the refusal to open the gates, which he expected, should be returned. Nor was he disappointed in this respect. Back came the mason with a message to the effect that the guard had not any instructions to admit the commons, and that, as the king had gone to Mile End, there would be no answer to the summons which Wat Tyler had sent.

"Very well," said the tiler; "now do you, John Ball, say a few words to the men, just to let them know who they are to look for when they get into yon place. Mind them of the arch-traitor,

Simon, and that pestilent Hales—*they* must not escape. And you, Jack Straw, hie you to the noble commons who lead their brethren under my command, and bid them get ready to win that place straightway. Within the next half-hour we must be inside!”

This language, spoken in a grandiloquent tone — half insolent, half commanderly — would, under ordinary circumstances, have sounded silly enough, since against any force, however numerous, but unfurnished with warlike engines, even a small garrison of resolute men could hold the Tower. But it seemed as if the mere presence of the rebels had plucked all soul out of the soldiers: they quaked for fear when they saw the enemy advancing, and in some cases actually threw down their arms and ran for shelter to their quarters. Will Allein in vain tried to rally them, even pricking some of them in his anger with the point of his sword. They were panicstricken — as unable as children to help themselves, much more those committed to their care.

Shameful though it be to tell, there was not the least resistance offered to the insurgents. They came to the gates, and finding them unguarded, rushed in tumultuously, shouting and yelling in the most horrible manner. The cowardice of the garrison did not save their lives; for the rebels, deeming all who came in their way and were not as themselves to be worthy of death, slew the terrified lack-hearts wherever they found them.

Will Allein, furious at the disgrace, broke his sword over the back of a fellow whom he was beating with the flat of it, and then, not waiting for the ill treatment which he was certain of receiving if the rebels caught him, hastened in the direction of the White Tower, hoping to be of some use in protecting the primate.

Already the creatures were shouting for the chief objects of their fury—the devoted men whom Ball’s eloquence had vilified to the people—and more than one man had his death because he could not tell in what part of the fortress these were likely to be found.

Will Allein gained the eastern end of the White Tower, which he entered by the small outer door that covered the staircase leading to the royal apartments. Barring the stoutly nailed door on

the inside, so as to cause the searchers at least some delay, he mounted the staircase to the anteroom of the princess's (the Dowager Princess of Wales, mother to King Richard) apartment, and there found a crowd of terrified servants, who ran hither and thither, scarcely knowing whether to stay or whither to run.

At first they took him for one of the rebels, and fled shrieking from him; but some, less scared than the rest, recognised Will for one of the Earl of Buckingham's esquires, and entreated him to provide the means of safety for them and the princess.

Will did his best to pacify them, and assured them, that since the rebels were actually in the Tower, the only chance of safety lay, not in resistance, but in quiet submission. He promised moreover to stand by them if any danger threatened, and he doubted not the name and character of the princess dowager would save her and her household harmless. Meantime, he said, there was a more imminent danger; and promising to return as quickly as possible, he left that part of the fortress, and threaded his way through the passages and rooms which intervened between it and the chapel of St. John.

In the council-chamber—the same to which I have already introduced my readers on the occasion when Master Philpot was summoned to answer for his conduct in the Mercer expedition—Will Allein found Sir Robert Hales, treasurer of England and Prior of the Order of St. John. With him was John Legge, one of the king's serjeants-at-law, and four or five friends who remained to them.

"I beg pardon, Sir Robert," said Allein, as the treasurer looked up to see who the new comer was; "I am seeking his grace the archbishop, and came this way as being the shortest. I did not know you were here."

"The time does not admit of ceremony, sir," answered Sir Robert. "You will find the archbishop in St. John's Chapel."

"I am hopeful of finding some means of escape for him," said Allein. "Let me entreat you, sir, to take like steps in your own behalf. Join us."

"If you can persuade the archbishop to go, I'll go too," replied Hales; "but he'll not budge an inch; and as for me, I have not

been accustomed all my life to retreat, and cannot begin now — before rebels, too! I thank you for your thought of me, however," he continued, "and will abide by what the primate consents to do."

Will Allein left the council-chamber, and passing through the guard-room and two other rooms, all tenantless, came to the head of the staircase which leads into the chapel. He paused a moment at the arrow-slit loophole, and heard rising up from below the cries of the insurgents, who had evidently got an inkling of the primate's whereabouts, and were coming for him. No time was to be lost. The plan he had formed for getting the noblemen away, by means of a barge from the river-gate, of which he had the key, was now clearly impracticable, for the rebels had possession of all the outlets to the White Tower. He resolved to get the archbishop and Sir Robert Hales, if possible, down to the torture-chamber, which was on the basement, and to hide them there in some of the many dark coverts until the tyranny of the insurgents was overpast.

Throwing aside the heavy curtain which covered the entrance to the chapel, he stepped into the aisle. The strains of sacred music struck his ear, and an acolyte, who was kneeling just outside the chancel side-screen, made a sign to him that he should not make a noise. Will moved quietly forward, and saw that the archbishop was in the act of serving the office of the Mass, attended by William Appledore, the king's confessor, and several priests. He did not know whether to break in upon the service. He hesitated, and almost made up his mind to wait, for he feared lest his interruption might be sacrilegious; but even then he heard above the sweet music of the service the fiendish yells of the rebels, and he determined at all risks to try and save the primate.

Running up the nave, heedless of the frowns and gesticulations of an old priest, who had been watching him with rising anger, Will Allein approached the altar where the archbishop stood. The archbishop was chanting the concluding passages, rapt apparently in the service he was rendering, when Will touched him, and bending on his knees at the same time that he made his obeisance to the altar, begged him to come away instantly.

Simon de Sudbury was not a man whom death could surprise or frighten. He had his standard of duty, and, as far as man could do so, acted up to it. He was now doing what he deemed to be his highest duty, and the approach of death could not scare him from it. He had passed the whole of the preceding night in solemn watching and prayer, foreknowing, as it seemed, the future which was so immediate. He took not any notice of Will until he had ended the service of the Mass—the last he was destined to sing—and then turning to the kneeling esquire, said,

“My son, God reward thee for thy filial love to your poor father in Christ, but I cannot quit this place!”

“Surely, my lord, it is your bounden duty to guard your life for the benefit of the Church,” said Will.

“If God thinks it will be for the Church’s good that I should live, these misguided men can do me no harm; but if He thinks the sacrifice of my life an advantage, His mercy, which is great as His wisdom, will send me strength that I may obey Him becomingly. Go, my son, seek safety for your own young life, and, if you can, help those who need assistance more than I do.”

So saying, the archbishop turned away from Will like one who is conscious that time is of value, and kneeling down in front of the altar, remained some minutes absorbed in prayer.

Ere Will Allein had time to obey the primate’s orders, which he construed into going back to the aid of the Princess of Wales, the echoes of the chapel were awakened by the cries of those who had found a way to the object of their wrath.

From both entrances to the chapel a stream of wild, half-drunken, half-dressed men poured in. They had been from tower to tower, from chamber to chamber, killing all who were so hardy as to bar their way, and hunting like so many hounds for the archbishop and Sir Robert Hales. They had entered the royal apartments near the banqueting-hall, and not finding in them the objects of their search, had wreaked their fury on the furniture and hangings, which they utterly destroyed.

From the king’s apartments they came to those of the princess, whose name protected her (as Will Allein had predicted) from

actual bodily harm, though it did not save her from insult. Into her own bed-room, where, half dead with fright, she lay, they came and demanded where she had hidden the traitors. In vain she expostulated, begged, and threatened—they heeded her no more than if she had not been present. One fellow, in his brutal merriment at the sad plight of the princess, went so far as to say that he could not be so uncourtier-like as to leave the lady's presence without a kiss, and, though some of his comrades would have held him back, he came to the bed-side of the king's mother, and dared to pollute her forehead with his dirty, unkempt face.

The princess's maidens were frightened out of their wits, though, beyond passing their coarse jokes upon them, the rebels did them no harm. Not content, however, with thrusting their swords through all the tapestry in the room, and into boxes of clothing in which they affected to think the two noblemen they sought were concealed, some of the fellows dared to say that the primate was concealed in the mattress on which the princess was lying. Deaf to her entreaties and careless of the shameful position in which their brutality placed her, they ran their swords into the bed underneath the lady, and then, assured that the archbishop was not there, quitted the room and hunted for him elsewhere.

In the council-chamber they found Sir Robert Hales and his friends, and with loud shouts and curses set upon them.

"This is the wretch who robs us of our money! This is the bloodsucker that takes food from our children! Down with him! Kill him by pieces! Off with his head!"

These cries were heard in the chapel, and were the first intimation which those who were there had of the approach of murderers. But Sir Robert Hales, as he was not the man to fly before such folk, so was he not the man to submit tamely to them. If the duty of the archbishop required resignation and humility from him, Sir Robert deemed his duty required that he should die—if die he must—as became the Prior of the Order of St. John.

He was ill provided with the means of defence, not having any

breastplate or body-armour. On his head he had a slight bacinet, the only defensive part of his dress. His only weapons were a broad two-edged sword, pointed also for thrusting, and a dagger. John Legge had a sword, and so had each of the remainder of the party. Thus armed, they prepared to sell their lives at a dear price. They retreated to a recess at the upper end of the room, and waited.

The first three men that came within reach of their swords bit the dust, and then the assailants made a rush. In the struggle which ensued, one of the attendants was slain, and John Legge was badly wounded, but owing chiefly to Sir Robert Hales' stout arm and blade the enemy were driven back. Their anger grew in proportion to the obstinacy of the defence, which had already cost the rebels ten lives, and they swore with horrible oaths that not one should find mercy. There is no knowing how long the siege of the recess would have lasted—the defence of it being so brave, and the strength of its approaches being increased by every fresh corpse, that served it as a rampart—had not one of the assailants picked up a large and heavy stool which stood under the council table, and hurled it with all his might into the little group of defenders.

The stool struck Sir Robert on the side of the head, causing him to stagger, his sword fell from his grasp, and he fainted. With a fiendish shout the rebels leaped the ghastly barrier formed by the dead bodies of their fellows, and filled the recess.

Why lengthen the mournful tale? Sir Robert Hales was taken up still unconscious, and his head being propped upon the stool, it was stricken off by repeated blows with a sword. John Legge, the king's serjeant, shared the same fate, and the others fell pierced through the body with many wounds. The murderers stayed only long enough to fix the heads they had cut off upon poles, and then hurried off in search of the archbishop, whom they found, as I have said, in the chapel of St. John.

Will Allein was standing near the door of the staircase by which he had reached the chapel, and was in act to ascend it again, with the intention of returning to the help of the princess,

when he was knocked down and kicked out of the way of the incomers—an accident which saved his life.

The place which had so lately been the scene of reverent devotion was now a theatre for the display of unbridled passion, and had nearly been the scene of a martyrdom. Instead of the solemn strains of sacred harmony, which had scarcely died away among its echoes, there was now shouting and horrible screaming. "Where is the traitor priest?" "Bring out the tyrant!" "Cut off his head!" These were the substitutes for prayerful words that by anticipation asked pardon for the crimes about to be committed.

A man whose name I know not, but who was the leader of the gang, strode up the nave of the chapel to the foot of the altar, unabashed by the signs and symbols of the faith which did seem to awe the others. He brandished a drawn sword in his hand, and, addressing himself to the clergy generally, demanded to be told which was "the traitor priest."

The terrified priests gave no answer; but one—William of Appledore—who hoped that the sign of salvation would be able to guard his master, seized the crucifix from the altar, and held it up on high between the rebel and the archbishop, who was yet praying in front of the altar.

"Out of the way, priest, or I'll make you go!" cried the man, raising his sword. "Where is the traitor who calls himself Archbishop of Canterbury?"

Simon de Sudbury was equal to his trial, being strengthened from the source whence he had long drawn comfort. He rose from his knees, and coming forward, said with dignity and composure,

"I am the Archbishop of Canterbury. I am he whom you seek. I am no traitor."

Without pity, without time for further shrift, the primate was dragged in his robes of office out of the chapel, out of the White Tower, out of the Tower itself, to Tower Hill, and there, amid the yells of the mad mob, with all the indignity which vulgar and debased minds could think of, Simon de Sudbury was cruelly beheaded, his lifeless body being treated with foulest contempt, and his head stuck upon a spear on London Bridge.

The accident which befell Will Allein was, as I have said, the means of saving his life. He was overthrown when about to mount the staircase leading to the princess's apartments, and, unnoticed by the rabble, who were in search of higher prey, he remained in the spot where he fell, half stunned, his head having struck against the stone base of a pillar.

He stayed there until after the insurgents had left the chapel with the poor archbishop in their clutches, and when he quite recovered his senses he found the place empty and quiet as the grave. Rising to his feet, he ascended the staircase and made his way to the council-chamber. There his sight was greeted by the headless trunk of Sir Robert Hales, which was lying disorderly as it had been left, and the dead bodies of those faithful few who had stood by him. There was no time for delay. Passing by the dead with regrets that could now stand them in little stead, Will Allein hastened on to where the princess and her attendants were still suffering from the effects of terror. His reappearance was the occasion of shrieks from many a woman, who, believing that every one in the fortress had been slain, took him for a ghost; but Will quickly reassured them, and bidding them lose not a moment in getting a few necessaries together for their own and their mistress's use, desired one of them to tell the princess that he wished to have an interview with her immediately.

Whilst the waiting-woman was gone Will Allein snatched up a wrapper to disguise his dress when he should presently appear in the courtyard below, and was then led by the woman to the chamber of the princess.

Apologising for intruding thus unseemly upon her highness, Will declared his wish to serve her, adding that whatever steps were taken must be taken at once, and suggesting a flight from the Tower.

"Whither am I to go, sir," asked the princess, "since this stronghold has not been able to protect me?"

"This is no longer a fit habitation for your highness, and I would advise your removal to the Tower Royal," answered Will.

"But it will be impossible to get thither," said the princess.

"There will be some difficulty, I admit," returned Will, "but the thing is not impossible."

"It is impossible we can get through that horde of wretches, who, they tell me, are in full possession of the city," said the princess.

"I propose we should go by water to Dowgate, my lady, and from that point to the Wardrobe I make no doubt of being able to conduct you. There you will be in safety; but for this place, there is no knowing what the people may do to it if his Majesty should be unable to repossess himself of it forthwith."

"Can we get away by water?" inquired the lady.

"Fortunately, I have the key of the river-gate, my lady," answered Will, "and if your highness will consent to go, I doubt not I shall be able to man the barge by the time you are ready. But let me entreat you to lose no time. The rebels will probably be here again before long."

"Is the archbishop safe?" asked the princess.

"He is beyond the reach of the malice of his enemies," replied Will.

"But where?" she inquired.

"In heaven, my lady," said Will.

"The archbishop dead?" she exclaimed.

"I fear he is ere this. Sir Robert Hales, Master John Legge, and a few of their friends I passed even now, lifeless, in the council-chamber, and his grace I fear has shared their fate," said Will.

"God help us!" cried the princess. "Where is the king?"

"He left for Mile End this morning, my lady. I have not heard of his Majesty's whereabouts since then," answered Will.

It was arranged that Will Allein should go and seek some men who might be trusted to row the barge, and that as soon as he had found them he should return and conduct the fugitives to the water-side.

Wrapped in the disguise which he had before snatched up, and loosening his sword in its scabbard for fear of accidents, Will Allein quitted the apartments of the Princess of Wales and made

his way to the courtyard. The motley crowd which lately had filled it was no longer there; with the exception of five or six of the craven garrison who were sneaking back now the danger had passed for the moment, there was not any one to be seen.

Will called to the men he saw that they should come to him, but either being Gascons they did not understand him, or mistaking him in his disguise for a straggling rebel, they kept on their way without noticing him. He walked on towards the river-gate, hearing as he did so the shouts of the rebels, which continuously floated on the air from the direction of Tower Hill, where was being enacted one of the most frightful tragedies—the murder of the primate—which it is possible to think of.

Passing under the archway of the Tower near the river (the Bloody Tower) Will looked in at the guard-house for volunteers for the barge. Luckily he found five men whose wits were not entirely scattered, and showing them who he was and the nature of the service he intended, induced them to accompany him and to seek four more, who would be enough to man the barge.

The crew were admitted by Will within the strongly-barred water-gate, and directed to prepare the barge which lay at the bottom of the steps for the reception of the princess. Will further enjoined them not to make any noise that would be likely to attract attention, and to get the outer gates ready for use. He then locked the gate at the top of the stairs, and returned to the White Tower without having been perceived.

At the White Tower he once more gained admittance by the little door through which he had previously passed, and reported his arrangements to the Princess of Wales. She, attended by four of her maidens who carried a small parcel of clothing apiece, followed Will Allein swiftly to the river. The door of the staircase was unlocked, the fugitives were admitted, and under Will's guidance conducted to the boat. The crew had made all ready, the little party was comfortably stowed in the stern-sheets of the barge, and Will Allein, who was the last to leave the stone steps, slippery with ooze and river slime, stepped in and took the helm.

"Push off!" he said in a low tone, as if afraid of being heard—a precaution not altogether unnecessary, for just as the outer gates which admitted to the river swung back, and the boat's head began to move outward, the fugitives heard the cries of the mad rebels who had come back into the Tower after satiating their cruel fancies on the dead body of their chief victim. Had the flight been seen pursuit had almost certainly followed, even though the principal fugitive was no less than the widow of the Black Prince.

By great good fortune the boat got away unperceived, and being pulled out quickly into the middle of the stream so as to be beyond bowshot, her head was put round in the direction of London, and she was driven by the strokes of eight strong rowers towards Dowgate Quay. As she passed London Bridge those in her could see rising high into the air the flames and smoke which incendiary hands had made at the expense of some fair house or public building, the sky was red with the glare of burning places, and the cries, and the gaunt forms, almost weird-like, which now and again stood out in relief against the glowing background, suggested thoughts of a place far different from London, and the idea that denizens of that place had now won possession of the city.

Unchallenged, unassailed, the boat kept on, and, favoured by the rising tide, speedily lessened the distance between the Tower and her destination, and after a course extending over little more than half an hour she ran alongside the wharf at Dowgate, the oars were laid in, and the boat was made fast head and stern to the landing-stage.

Will Allein jumped out, assisted his companions to land, and directing one man to remain behind as boat-keeper, bade the others attend him as an escort for the ladies. The little company ascended Dowgate Hill, where the smoking remains of the Erber, in which Richard Lions, the lapidary (whose head the rebels struck off in Cheap), dwelt, testified to the recent work of the destroyer. They continued unmolested till they reached the Wardrobe or Tower Royal, where an entrance was speedily gained, and the

Princess of Wales was placed in safety and in the care of her own faithful servants.

Will Allein having discharged this part of his duty, retired with promises from the princess of ample future acknowledgment for his services, and then, thinking that he was bound to go back to his post at the Tower, returned to Dowgate Wharf; learning, however, on the way the welcome news that succours were advancing towards London from the north and the west, and that they might be expected on the following day, he pulled back again to the Tower Royal, where I must leave him for a while, in order that I may show what effect the approach of assistance had upon the king and his advisers, and how his Majesty managed to rid London of the Kentish rebels.

In furtherance of the plan which had been adopted at the council, every exertion was made on behalf of the members to form a network of troops about the rebels, which should close in and crush them at the earliest possible time. Archdale was lent, as a handy and trustworthy fellow, to Sir Robert Knollys, and with him was busy in getting ready for a brush. My old friend Oswald Barnes, whom lately I had not seen so often as could be desired, was attached to the company which William Walworth was raising; and I remained in command of the small body which it lay within the influence of Master Philpot to rear in arms.

King Richard, after his interview with the Essex men, heard of what had taken place at the Tower, and deeming it imprudent without more men than he had at his disposal to re-occupy that place, went to where his mother was, at the Wardrobe in Tower Royal. The result of the interview had been the grant of charters of freedom and certain personal rights with which most of the east countrymen present were satisfied, and they returned to their homes, but Wat Tyler, with thirty thousand men at his back, remained in London, insatiable in his demands, and growing daily in pride. The king was not yet prepared to attack him, and hoped, almost against hope, that he might also satisfy him with charters as he had done the others.

These rebels who remained were for the most part Kentish men, and a fine time they made of it. In the houses of the principal citizens were quartered some of the veriest ragamuffins that could be found in rascaldom, and wealthy merchants and magistrates were compelled to do them service. An alderman was forced to clean Wat Tyler's horse, while a proud member of the Common Council was made his cupbearer. Whoever could not keep his house with weapons had to entertain the tiler's followers. John Ball took up his quarters in the house of one of the canons of St. Paul's; Jack Straw and Hob the miller occupied Sir Nicholas Brembre's house, he having fled for his life into the country, where he was trying to raise a company for the king's service. The taverns in every part, the cooks' houses in East Cheap, all places that offered any bait for these hungry wolves suffered extremely, and with good living and idleness the strangers grew wanton, and were hourly less disposed to listen to the orders even of those who led them. The riches of the city, which were exaggerated because not known, excited the cupidity of the men. They had been in the city several days, and had had nothing but meat and wine and clothing (poor things!) at the expense of the citizens; why should they not now have gold as well? If they did not take it soon, the men from other counties, who were said to be on the road, would be there to share with them. The people murmured against their chiefs, and Wat Tyler thought fit to summon a number of them to meet him in Smithfield, in order that it might be settled what should be done.

Accordingly, on the Saturday morning (the first Saturday in July) some twenty thousand assembled in Smithfield, parading the king's banners which they had taken from the Tower, and armed in the irregular way that answered to the incongruousness of their attire. Wat Tyler, Ball, Jack Straw, and the other chiefs were there, and Tyler, who rode the same beautiful charger he had ridden the day the Savoy was burned, addressed the people from his saddle.

"My fellow-countrymen!" said Tyler, "I am told that you murmur at being kept so long in this wealthy city without getting

any good reward for your pains. Well, I do not want to stop in it a moment longer than will be enough for us to achieve our object. We have punished some of the traitors, though not all, and Richard has made offers of charters, which I have refused because they were not nearly large enough. The pardons he offers will not be of any use, for as soon as we are gone he will get together an army and come after us, and where then will be the fruit of our labour? No, we'll have what we came for," (he did not state—perhaps he did not quite know—what that was) "or we'll pillage this city and burn it, and kill all the nobles, and make everybody equal."

Loud shouts of applause rent the air as Tyler ended his harangue. Ball, who rode a mule, following the custom of the higher clergy, was about to address the host, when a small party of horsemen was seen coming from the north-western approach to Smithfield, upon which the general attention was fixed.

"It is the king!" exclaimed Tyler, feeling somewhat surprised at the suddenness of Richard's appearance, and hardly knowing what to do.

It so happened that morning that the king left the Wardrobe quite early, and rode to Westminster, where he heard Mass in the abbey, and made his devotions at the favourite shrine of our Lady.*

At nine o'clock he remounted his horse, and, attended by a train of some sixty in all, prepared to go back to the Wardrobe. Among the king's retinue were the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, Sir Robert de Namur, the Lord de Vervain, Sir John Newton, who, it will be remembered, had been the unwilling ambassador from Tyler to King Richard in the Tower, William Walworth, who was lord mayor, and my master. It was in attendance upon Master Philpot that I saw and heard what I shall now relate.

We rode along the Strand as far as the Savoy, when the king, not enduring to see the blackened ruin of that once noble house, turned off the causeway in an easterly direction, intending to

* Froissart says: "In this church (St. Peter's) there is a statue of our Lady in a small chapel, that has many virtues and performs great miracles, in which the Kings of England have much faith."

pass through Smithfield and Newgate, by Knight Rider Street, and so to the Tower Royal. He had not any intention of encountering the rebels that day, and was surprised to find them arrayed before him when he rode into Smithfield.

The Earl of Salisbury proposed that they should turn back, but the king would not hear of doing so, and seeing the people, he turned to Sir John Newton, and said,

“Go, Sir John, to those men yonder, for you know something of them, and ask them what it is they would have from me. I have offered them charters like those the Essex men had. What more is it that they require? Go boldly; we will await your return in front of the gate of St. Bartholomew’s Priory here. Go, and return quickly.”

Sir John rode forward to deliver his message, and had the greatest difficulty to keep his temper under the insolent language and bearing of the rebel, who resented the knight’s approaching him on horseback, saying that it behoved him to come on foot into the presence of the commons’ chief, and otherwise galling the heart of the nobleman almost beyond endurance. But Sir John knew the necessity there was for keeping from any outburst on this occasion. He delivered his message, and came back to the king, Tyler refusing to give him any answer.

When the rebels saw that it was the king who came, Tyler said to them,

“Now the king is here, I will speak to him myself. We will have no fetch-and-carry Newtons to do our work. Do not you stir from hence until I give you a signal.” He then made a motion with his hand, and continued, “When you shall see me make this sign, then come you forward and kill every one except the king. Be sure you do not hurt the king, for he is young, and we can do what we please with him; and by carrying him with us through England, we shall be lords of it all without any opposition.”

He conferred for a minute or two with his colleagues, and then, being ridiculously dressed in a half fine, half dirty suit that had been picked out of some gentleman’s wardrobe, and wearing a long straight sword that had been in the wars with some Norman

baron, spurred forward to the priory gate. Riding purposely so close to the king that his horse's head touched the crupper of the king's horse, he lifted himself in his stirrups, leaning insolently forward, and said to Richard,

"King, dost thou see all those men there?"

"I do," answered Richard; "why dost thou ask?"

"Because they are every one of them under my command, and have sworn by their faith and loyalty to do whatever I shall order them."

"Very well," said the king, "I have no objection."

"Ay, but," returned the tiler, "thinkest thou these men, and many thousands more who are here within my call, will depart from this city till they have thy letters?"

"I do not desire they should," answered Richard; "the letters have been ordered, and will be delivered out one after the other. But, my friend, I pray thee go back to thy companions and exhort them to depart from London. Be peaceable and careful of yourselves, for it is my determination that you shall all of you have your letters by villages and towns, as it has been agreed on with your comrades."

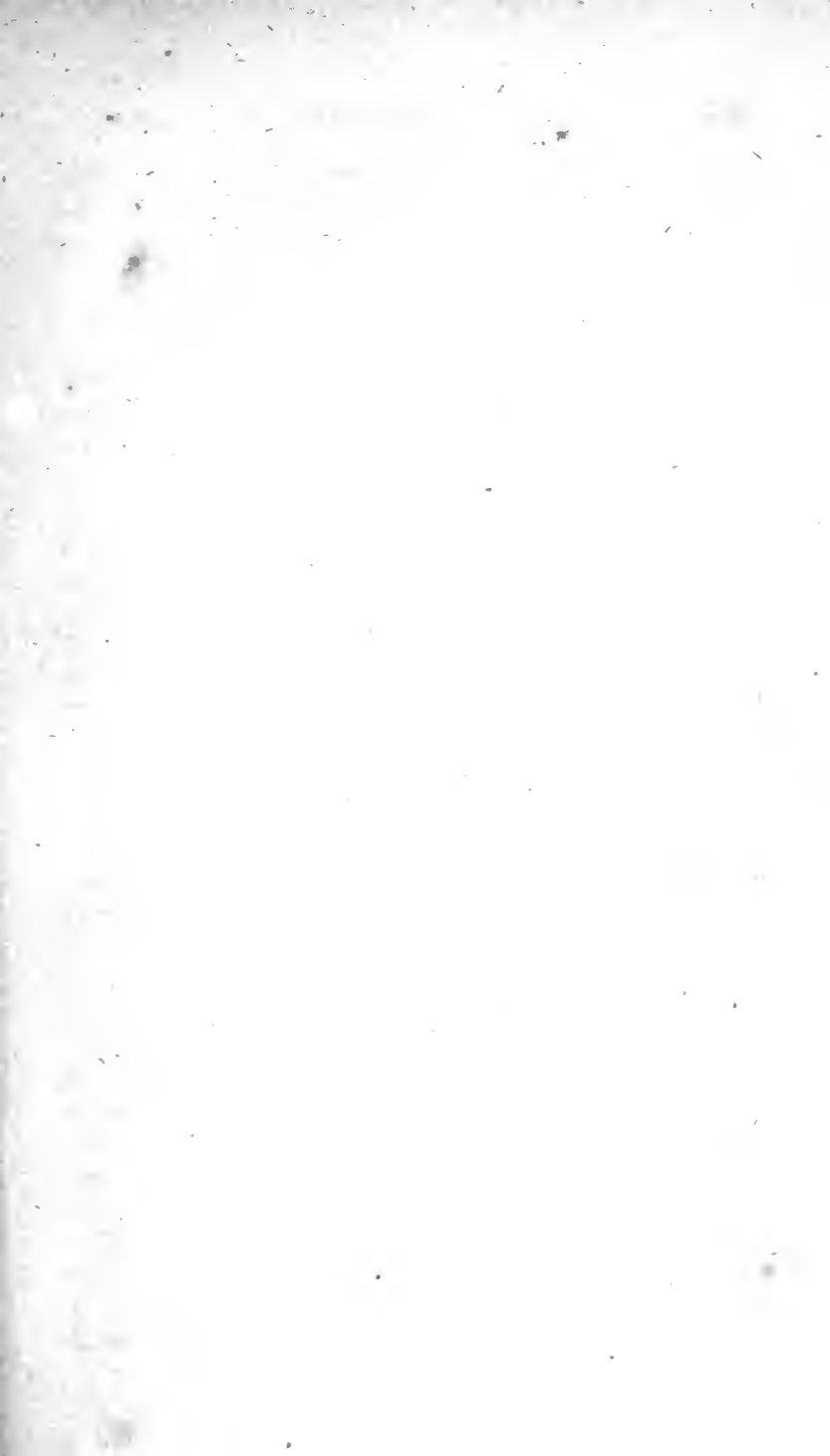
The fellow was about to make some other rude speech tending to a riot, which was the object he had in view, when a very richly worked dagger which Sir John Newton bore in his girdle attracted his attention, and excited his cupidity.

"Give me that dagger," said Tyler, in a tone intentionally harsh and brutal.

"I will not," answered Sir John; "why should I?"

But the king, not wishing to give the rebel any pretext for doing what he wanted, desired the knight to give up the dagger, and he did so. Tyler played a few moments with the weapon, which he examined as one more accustomed to make than to use such things, and then bade Sir John give him the sword which he carried in his hand. The sword was the king's own, and Sir John, utterly unable to bear any longer the man's insolence, hurled foul scorn at him.

"Thou shalt not have it as I live, thou slave! thou art not fit





THE DEATH OF WAT TYLER.

even to be killed by it; and if thou and I were here alone, thou hadst not dared to say what thou hast said for as large a heap of gold as this church!"

"By the saints!" cried Tyler, "I will not eat this day until I have thy head!"

And as he spoke his dark countenance lowered with the storm of passion which was working within, while his right hand plucked out his own dagger, with which he made a sudden and deadly stroke at Sir John Newton's breast. Fortunate it was for the knight that at this particular moment his horse swerved on one side. The blow, aimed full at the heart, missed its goal, and the violence which had given it motion nearly caused the tiler to lose his balance in the saddle.

Whether it was to save himself from falling, or, as many thought, part of a previously-conceived plan for carrying off the king, I know not, but, immediately after recovering his seat, the man seized hold of the king's bridle, drawing the horse a few feet forward.

There was no time for thought, but for action only. The lord mayor, who was splendidly mounted and dressed in full armour, spurred his horse right against Wat Tyler, causing horse and man to reel several paces back, and released the king from the rebel's hold.

"How now?" cried Tyler, considerably shaken by the blow. "What in the devil's name have I said or done that concerns thee, Master Mayor?"

"Done?" said Walworth, thoroughly angry, and throwing off all restraint. "Thou scoundrel, how darest thou thus behave in the presence of the king? Does it become a stinking rascal as thou art to use such speech to this gentleman here? I will not live a day if thou pay not for it!"

And, suiting the action to the word, he laid his hand on the hilt of his *badelaire*,* which flashed a moment in the morning sun, and then buried itself in the neck of the bold rebel.

* A short and broad backsword, being towards the point like a Turkish scimitar.

Wat Tyler fell, badly wounded, to the ground, his horse starting back gaily, and tossing its head, as glad to be rid of such a burden. Master Philpot, foreseeing the need of assistance, bade me ride off as fast as might be to Sir Robert Knollys, and entreat him to come up with such men as were with him. As I turned to obey, I saw Wat Tyler lying on the ground, his face deadly pale, and the blood streaming from his neck, but apparently he was not mortally wounded; so, thinking to make an end to so good a beginning, John Cavendish, a squire who was in attendance on the king, leaped from his horse, and, coming up to Tyler, just rising from the ground, dispatched him with several blows of his dagger. A wild shout burst from the ranks of the insurgents—

“Our captain is killed! Let us die too, or at least avenge him upon these men!”

They stood with bows bent, in threatening array, when the king, with an admirable courage, clapped spurs to his horse, and, riding forward to where the people stood, beckoned with his hand, and said,

“What mean ye, my men? What ails you? Will you shoot at your king? You need not regret the death of a traitor. I am your king. I will be your leader. Follow me to the fields, and you shall have what you ask.”

While all this was going on, I rode off, and soon came to where Sir Robert was, in Crocker's Lane. William Walworth had also gone to gather what succours he might, and before the rebels had time to clear off the ground, some two thousand men-at-arms and knights, under the command of Sir Robert Knollys, Sir Perducas d'Albrecht, and Sir Nicholas Brembre, who had fortunately just then returned to London, rode into Smithfield, ready and willing to strike a blow for King Richard and themselves. Sir Robert came riding furiously up to the priory gate, and besought the king's leave to fall on and slay all the insurgents; and when the king told him to take away from the people the royal banners which they had gotten into their hands, and then to drive them home, without killing them, the worthy old sword-eater could hardly keep his temper.

"By Heaven! hanging is too good for them!" exclaimed he. "They should be made to kill each other, lest the hangman should be degraded."

"Be calm, Sir Robert," replied the king. "I thank you heartily for your timely aid, which, and the bravery of our good friend Walworth here, have saved my life; but these poor folk have been abused and misguided. I would not have them suffer for the faults of others."

The king's orders were promptly obeyed: the people were deprived of their banners and arms, and driven by the soldiers like so many geese; and I fear that, in the act, many of them fared no better than if the king's orders had not been uttered. So soon as the work of dispersion had begun—and it was evident that the spirit of the rebels was broken—the king, before leaving the spot which was the scene of his danger and his triumph, conferred the honour of knighthood upon three men, in two of whom I had the liveliest interest, and whose promotion yielded me the most unfeigned pleasure. The three new knights were Sir William Walworth, who had struck the first blow at the enormous treason; Sir John Cavendish, who had ended the matter; and last, but far from least, my own beloved friend and master, Sir John Philpot. His counsel and money, his time and his thoughts, had long and consistently given substantial aid to the state. As a member of the Parliament, as the destroyer of the Scotch pirates, as the munificent furnisher of the Earl of Buckingham's Breton expedition, as lord mayor, as a benefactor to the city and the nation, he had ever shone conspicuously. King Richard took this occasion to notice his services, and all men rejoiced as at some favour conferred upon themselves when John Philpot received from the hands of his sovereign this special mark of the royal approval.

Having thus unexpectedly got rid of so great a danger, the king in high glee rode on to the Wardrobe, where he found his mother exceedingly anxious because of men who had come from Smithfield, when the encounter there began, crying out that the rebels were killing the king.

“Ha! fair son,” said she, “what pain and anguish have I not suffered for you this day!”

“Certainly, madam,” replied the king, “I am well assured of that; but now let us rejoice and thank God, since I have this day regained my inheritance and the kingdom of England, which I had lost.”

The king remained the whole of that day at the Wardrobe, and the princess brought to his notice what service Will Allein had done in bringing her thither so courageously from the Tower. It was not more than he deserved, but Will Allein thought it a reward far exceeding his merits when the king sent for him, and with many flattering words conferred upon him the honour of knighthood.

Proclamation was made that night warning the people that all who were not Londoners, or had not been dwelling in the city for a year and a day, should depart by sunrise next day, on pain of death; an order which, though not intended to be executed strictly, had so thoroughly the effect of frightening the people that they fled from the city in all directions.

The charters, already granted by the king, were revoked as having been extorted through violence, and examples were made, especially by the Bishop of Norwich, in the eastern counties, which were meant to terrify the rebels into keeping quiet for the future.

CHAPTER XLV.

SIR WALTER ATTE LEE TRIES PACIFIC MEASURES—KING RICHARD COMES TO ST. ALBAN'S — THE DEATH OF JOHN BALL, ST. MARY PRIEST OF YORK.

"Ah God! that ghastly gibbet;
How dismal 't is to see
The great tall spectral skeleton,
The ladder and the tree."

ATTOUN.



THERE is no need to multiply instances of the way in which the insurgents were treated: from one all may be learned. I shall therefore content myself with giving an account of one case which I witnessed, and in the preparation of which some of my friends who are mentioned in these memoirs had a principal part. It is the case of John Ball, the priest, whose speech to the rebels at Canterbury has already been given, and who was designated by the voice of the tiler and his followers Archbishop-elect of Canterbury.

The names of the chief leaders of the rebellion were as follow: Walter Tyler (or, as some call him, Walter Helyer), whom Sir William Walworth slew; John Straw, John Kyrkeby, Allan

Threder, Thomas Scot, Ralph Rugge, John Wrawe, and John Littestere.

Besides these were William Grindecobbe, William Calindon, and John Barbiton, who suffered at St. Alban's, and others whose names let oblivion wash out of history. But of them all there was not, perhaps, a more noteworthy man than the priest of whose fate I now tell. By his agency the spirit of discontent found expression, and declared itself to the hearts of the people; his speeches, sermons, and letters worked the people up to the enthusiasm they displayed in so evil a fashion; his better sense and shrewd head guided the counsels of their leaders.*

* I have given some account of his speech at Canterbury when the rebellion first broke out, and now I copy a letter of his which was largely distributed throughout the disaffected districts, and which was as follows :

“John Schep, som tyme Seynt Marie prest of York, and nowe of Colchestre, greteth welle Johan Nameles, and Johan the Mullere, and Johan Cartere, and biddeth hem that thei ware of gyle in borugh, and stondeth togiddir in Goddis name; and biddeth Peres Plowman go to his werke and chastise welle Hobbe the robber, and taketh with you Johan Trewman, and alle his felaws, and no mo, and loke scharpe you to on hened and no mo.

“Johan the Muller hath ygrounde smal, smal, smal;
The Kyngis sone of hevene shalle pay for all.
Be ware or ye be wo,
Knoweth your frende fro youre foo,
Haveth ynowe, and seythe ‘Hoo:’
And do welle and bettre, and fleth synne,
And seketh pees, and holde thereynne.

And so biddeth Johan Trewman and alle his felawes.”

This letter has been given in the original words in order to show the spelling and form of the English language at this period. For the convenience of those who, being unaccustomed to reading such, might not be able to understand it, the following rendering of the letter into modern English is added. The persons addressed are only fictitious. Their names, symbolical and generally descriptive, do not belong to any one in particular, any more than the name John Schep is the writer's proper name :

“John Sheep, sometime Saint Mary priest at York, and now of Colchester, greeteth well John Nameless, and John the Miller, and John Carter, and biddeth them that they beware of guile in the city, and stand together in God's name; and biddeth Piers Plowman go to his work and chastise well Hobbe the robber (*i.e.*, the lords), and take with you John Trucman and all his fellows, and no more, and look you sharp to one head and no more.”

Ball, who was excommunicated on account of his preaching the doctrines

When the king, who had defeated the rebels of Essex and Norfolk, heard of the doings of the people at St. Alban's, how they had extorted money from the abbot, taken away the abbey charters, and threatened violence to the orderly people of the place, he determined to come thither himself with the large force he had collected, and reduce the insurgents to obedience.

But the abbot and Sir Walter Atte Lee—especially the latter—vehemently urged his Majesty not to do this, being afraid lest the presence of so many men should ruin the country, which was not rich in corn and other victuals. Sir Walter had, perhaps, another reason, based upon kindly consideration for the people amongst whom he lived—he was a knight of Hertfordshire—and he hoped by restraining the king from coming, as he would have come, in wrath, to get better terms for the people, who undoubtedly had great and heavy causes of complaint, and deserved better treatment than they had received at the hands of the royal officers, and especially of the warlike and bruise-loving Bishop of Norwich.

It was not without much difficulty that Sir Walter Atte Lee prevailed. The king did, however, agree to this—that Sir Walter should try his hand first at bringing the people of St. Alban's to a sense of their crime and folly, declaring that if the deputy did not succeed he would come himself and take vengeance. A commission was given to Sir Walter, with whom several other knights were associated, to go down and make order, and get restitution of the property taken from the abbey.

As soon as the St. Alban's folk heard of the commission they began to fear for the consequences of their rebellious behaviour,

of Wyclif, was also author of the sermon upon the famous text of his own framing, which characterises the age in which he lived. The text was the cry of the English people long after Wat Tyler's rebellion was crushed, and until the insecurity upon the throne of a new dynasty caused such a coalition between king and commons, and such a granting of privileges by the one to the other, as smoothed off the rough edges of difference of class, and made the condition of the people more bearable, if not more equal. The sermon was delivered on Blackheath, and the text was :

“ When Adam dalf, and Eve span,
 Wo was thanne a gentilman ? ”

F. D.

and many would have fled but for the exhortations of William Grindecobbe, a citizen of the place (he was afterwards hanged), who harangued them in the open street by the Moot Hall in this fashion: "Be stout-hearted men, for we are rich, and help will not be wanting so long as we have money. Remember! the neighbouring towns are allied with us, and will assist if need be. Let us ride forth betimes, like men, to meet this knight before he reaches our town, and ask him if he comes in peace or not; because if not we will drive him away again with blows."*

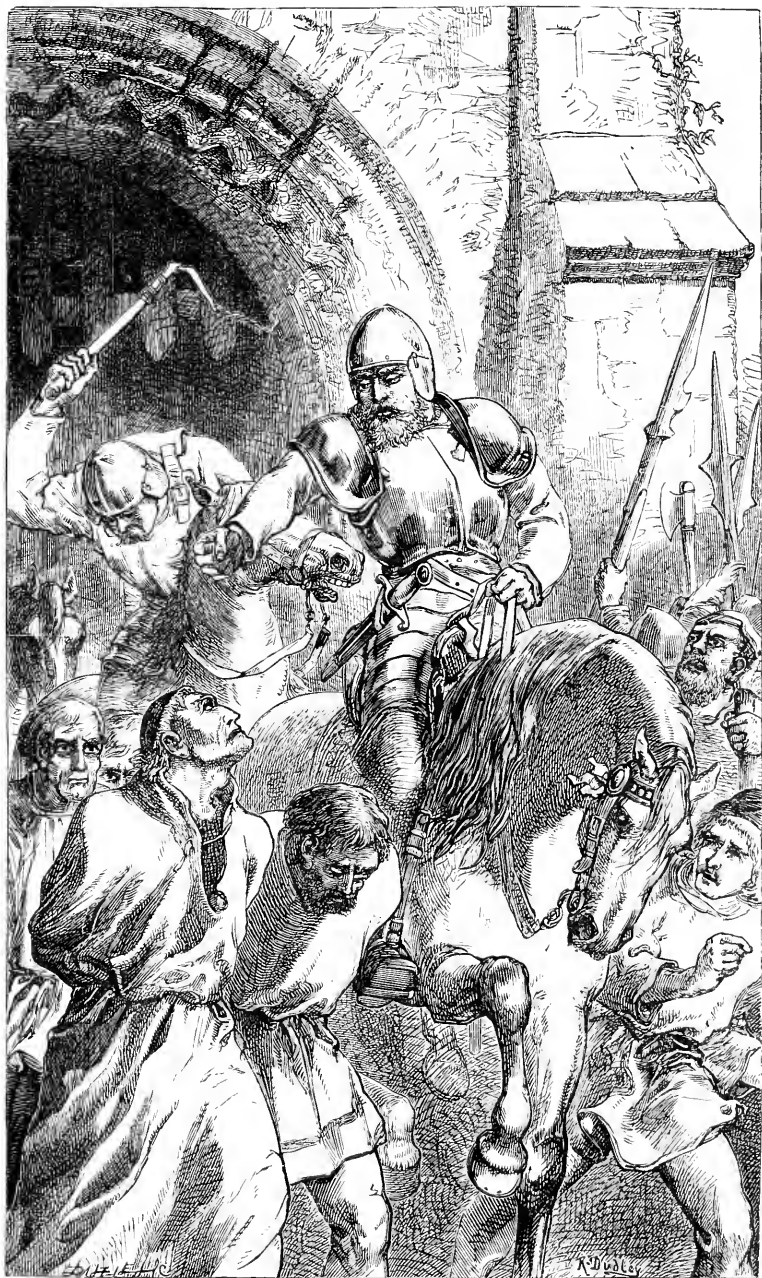
They went forth accordingly and met Sir Walter, whom they found to be "a spur of incredible sharpness," far too well attended by men-at-arms and archers to allow of their dealing with him according to their wishes. So instead of driving him away with blows, or anything else, they escorted him into the town, and he addressed them at Derfold Wood, and told them how he had stepped in between them and the king's displeasure, which he represented to them as great, finishing his speech by urging them to surrender to him as soon as possible the leaders in the late tumults, and to give satisfaction to the abbot, whom they would find, he said, "sufficiently reasonable, being a man who was well known as just and upright."

But after many fair promises, not kept, on the part of the people, Sir Walter found his mission a vain one; the townsmen would not be amenable to reason, nor would they do anything that was required of them. They would not give up the charters of the abbey, nor present indictments against the ringleaders, though the approach of the Earl of Warwick and Sir Thomas Percy with a large force, which afterwards retired, induced them at one time to think of doing the royal bidding.

King Richard therefore resolved personally to take notice of the people's insolence; and, despite the fears of the abbot and others as to the supplies of food, came down to St. Alban's and took up his quarters at the abbey. Sir Robert Tresilian, the chief

* Walsingham, from whose chronicle the facts here stated are taken, drily observes—"A foolish speech pleased fools, so that on the strength of it they went forth at once."





JOHN BALL AND HIS COMPANIONS ARE LED TO EXECUTION.

justice, came with the king, and immediately sat for the trial of prisoners, among whom was William Grindecobbe, the citizen of St. Alban's who had stirred up strife on the advent of Sir Walter Atte Lee.

John Ball had been taken by the men of Coventry, and brought to St. Alban's for trial. It was a journey on some business which Sir John Philpot had with the abbot that enabled me to be present at the scene I will describe. Arthur Trewin, who still abode with us, though his hurts, received at the sacking of the New Temple, where healed and well, accompanied me. He was charged with some message from the new Prior of St. John to the chief justice.

We rode through Stanmore, Aldenham, and Watford, at which last-named place we stopped to dine, and towards evening on a hot July day we came near to the ancient town of St. Alban's. The sun, setting, shed a flood of golden light on the towers and western face of the abbey, which stood out against the clear sky in sharply-defined outline, crowning with the crown of its own beauty the summit of the hill.

From the smaller tower of the abbot's lodgings the royal banner floated, its gorgeous colours catching the glow of the sunset, and showing more splendidly than in the duller light of the day. King Richard was lodged in the abbot's house, and ere we reached the town we found other evidences of his presence besides the flag. Encamped on the grassy side of the abbey hill was the greater part of the force he had brought with him to overawe the insurgents; while along the eastern slope, and stretching as far as the entrance to the town itself, was the line of tents which, to judge by the pennons that waved from the lances in front of them, were those allotted to the higher nobles and knights who composed the immediate retinue of the king.

"See yonder," cried Arthur, "that sacrilegious archer washing himself in the very stream that gave way before the proto-martyr!"

"What do you mean, Arthur?" I asked.

"Why," said he, "did you never hear the story of St. Alban's execution?"

"No," answered I; "was there anything remarkable about it?"

"Indeed there was, if Venerable Bede is to be trusted," rejoined Arthur; "and that he must be so is beyond question, for but for his book we should know little of what was done in the old time. Thanks to the monks, whom these wretches" (Arthur alluded to the rebels) "revile so, and thanks to Bede, whose soul may God rest, for he was of learned men chief, we know somewhat, but not much. Bede tells us the history of holy St. Alban's martyrdom, and there, I take it, is the stream which left its bed to allow the holy man to pass."

"Tell me the story, Arthur," I asked.

"When we have more time," replied he, "I will tell you the whole thing; both how the stream dried up before the martyr, and how the headsman's eyes dropped out when he would have stricken off the head of the innocent. But I doubt not you will hear the story from those better acquainted with it before you leave the town.* Who are these, I wonder?" continued he, point-

* The following extract from Bede's "Ecclesiastical History" will explain the circumstances alluded to by Arthur Trewin. Bede is writing of the trial and condemnation of St. Alban for believing in the Christian faith, which took place in A.D. 305. "Being led to execution, he came to a river, which, with a most rapid course, ran between the wall of the town and the arena where he was to be executed. He there saw a multitude of persons of both sexes, and of several ages and conditions, who were doubtlessly assembled by Divine instinct to attend the blessed confessor and martyr, and had so taken up the bridge on the river that he could scarce pass over that evening. In short, almost all had gone out, so that the judge remained in the city without attendance. St. Alban, therefore, urged by an ardent and devout wish to arrive quickly at martyrdom, drew near to the stream, and on lifting up his eyes to heaven the channel was immediately dried up, and he perceived that the water had departed and made way for him to pass. Among the rest the executioner who was to have put him to death observed this, and moved by Divine inspiration, hastened to meet him at the place of execution, and, casting down the sword which he carried ready drawn, fell at his feet, praying that he might rather suffer with the martyr whom he was ordered to execute, or, if possible, instead of him.

"Whilst he thus from a persecutor was become a companion in the faith, and the other executioners hesitated to take up the sword which was lying on the ground, the reverend confessor, accompanied by the multitude,

ing to a group which included several horsemen, around whom, though they were moving, a number of people pressed, shouting something which we could not hear.

Pricking our horses out of the walking pace they had adopted, we galloped across the interval between ourselves and the group, and coming up found four men-at-arms and ten archers wearing the royal badge—a sun—who had with them, as unwilling companions, four men of the citizen class, whose arms were bound tightly behind their backs, and made fast by a slack rope to the saddles of the horsemen.

The poor wretches looked tired and fagged as they footed it in this sad fashion, urged on by their conductors with blows and curses whenever they showed signs of flagging, which it was not surprising they should do, considering they had been forced to trudge all the way from Hertford.

The people who surrounded them tried, some to comfort, some to mock; but succeeded in doing neither effectually, for the prisoners were past being comforted in the view of that certain death which also made them indifferent to gibes. With dogged indifference—perhaps it might be more correctly said, with resignation—they marched to their fate, which was assured; for, though wofully changed in appearance and manner, the foremost of the captives was recognised by his fellows for William Grinde-

ascended a hill, about five hundred paces from the place, adorned, or rather clothed, with all kinds of flowers, having its sides neither perpendicular nor even craggy, but sloping down in a most beautiful plain, worthy from its lovely appearance to be the scene of a martyr's sufferings. On the top of this hill St. Alban prayed that God would give him water, and immediately a living spring broke out before his feet, the course being confined, so that all men perceived that the river also had been dried up in consequence of the martyr's presence. Nor was it likely that the martyr, who had left no water remaining in the river, should want some on the top of the hill, unless he thought it suitable to the occasion.

"The river having performed the holy service, returned to its natural course, leaving a testimony of its obedience. Here, therefore, the head of our most courageous martyr was struck off, and here he received the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him. But he who gave the wicked stroke was not permitted to rejoice over the deceased, for his eyes dropped upon the ground together with the blessed martyr's head."

cobbe, the stirrer-up of the people. His companions, William Calindon and John Barbiton, had been captured with him, and all three taken to Hertford; and when these men were fetched by the king's order, for the purpose of being tried before the chief justice at St. Alban's, it was thought fit to send with them the fourth prisoner, who had been forwarded to Hertford by the men of Coventry, and who was no other than John Ball, the St. Mary priest of York.

How changed since the time when he preached sedition at Canterbury! or when, better employed, he went about from town to town declaring the doctrines which his master in religious thought, John Wyclif, first promulgated! He looked, if possible, more forlorn than the others, yet there was a sparkle in his eye of a spirit which had ever been too restless for the body which held it, and which was only still now because there was not strength enough in that frail tenement to give it play.

The soldiers passed on with their charge, and we rode to the abbey gate to deliver ourselves of the commission with which we had been intrusted.

Sir Robert Tresilian, Chief Justice of England, made short work with the rebels. Sitting in the Moot Hall in the town, he proceeded with the trials on the day after his arrival, and, on the finding of the juries, sentenced the prisoners to suffer the pains of treason.

The four men whom we saw as we rode into the town were appointed to die, and all, save Ball, were immediately hanged. The sentence upon Ball, which condemned him to be hanged, beheaded, disembowelled, and quartered, was, at the intercession of the Bishop of London, who was solicitous for the safety of his soul, made to wait for its execution from the Saturday to the Monday.

There was a strong muster of people to see Ball die. His name was familiar in the mouth of every one, his deeds were notorious, and the cause for which he was about to suffer was eminently a popular one. Convicted clearly enough under the Statute of Treason which had passed during the late king's reign, the people acquitted him in their hearts of the crime of which he had been

found guilty. The lords and those of their inclining rejoiced at the punishment of so great a traitor; the people grieved at the death of one they deemed a martyr; so that, both sides having such deep interest in the man, flocked, though with different sympathies, to witness his death.

On the top of the hill, conspicuous for a long distance round, and not more than twenty yards from the east wall of the Lady Chapel, a lofty gallows had been reared. Dangling from the centre of it was a hangman's noose, which swayed to and fro in the light breeze that cooled the commencement of as lovely a day as had blessed the land all the summer. A ladder was resting against the cross-beam, the top of which was garnished with grim evidences of man's cruelty, in the shape of spiked, parboiled heads, that had graced the shoulders of as fine men as were ever driven by feudalism into rebellion.

The hateful appliances which the hangman's office needed to carry out the sentence were to be seen on the green sward beneath the gallows, contrasting hideously with the beautiful objects which Nature had scattered plentifully around, and with the signs which the neighbouring abbey afforded of a spirit in man most amiably different from that which had ordered this morning's work.

By six o'clock a strong guard of royal troops — loved none the more by the people for being mostly foreigners — took possession of the space immediately adjoining the gallows, being formed into a hollow square within which the hangman was to do his work. A dense crowd of people from all the country round—from Hertford, Watford, Barnet, and from St. Alban's itself—pressed upon each side of the square, and from every part of the abbey which commanded a view of the spot eager faces looked out.

The presence of so many soldiers restrained the people, who did not by so small a sign as even a cry testify their sense of the fate of the condemned. In sullen silence, as men who must be passive through force, they waited.

At half-past six the gate of the inclosing wall on the north side of the abbey was thrown open, and a procession of monks, chanting the dirge of the "*Miserere*," came out, followed by a man

dressed in the costume of the "poor preachers," with pinioned arms, and closely guarded. Behind came a handsomely-dressed company, including King Richard and the principal noblemen of his court. A space was cleared for them by the soldiers, who opened one side of their square to receive them, and then, all being ready, came the beginning of the end.

John Ball, upon whom the prospect of death and the urgings of his spiritual masters had wrought so great change that he publicly acknowledged the justice of his sentence and deplored his fault, even went so far as to condemn his course of life wherein he had taught the heresy of Wyclif, and received in return for this recantation the blessing of the abbot; and, having asked the people's prayers to help his soul to heaven, resigned himself to the executioner's hands.


Amid the deep silence of a large concourse of men, pitied by most, despised by some, John Ball was put to death with all the cruel circumstances which were directed by the sentence, but which I forbear to describe. His punishment proved to be a great example, on account of the high position he had occupied among the late insurgents; but it did not satisfy the vengeance of the king, who hanged all, and they were very many, that were convicted before the judges.

CHAPTER XLVI.

SIR JOHN PHILPOT DIES, AND LEAVES A GREAT CHARGE TO ME.

“ Yet, ere his happie soule to heaven went
Out of this fleshlie gaole, he did devise
Unto his heavenlie Maker to present
His bodie, as a spotles sacrifice.”

SPENSER'S *Ruines of Time*.

 HERE was an appearance of something unusual at Sir John Philpot's house on the morning of the 10th July, 1384. Servants were passing to and fro continually but noiselessly about the house, messengers were coming and going from other quarters of the city, and there was an air of solemnity and anxiety upon the face of each which betokened that something of more than ordinary moment was stirring.

Among the strangers who came—and they were many—might have been seen the chief of London merchants, knights and noblemen not a few, and even persons wearing the king's badge, who asked the gatekeeper for tidings of Sir John Philpot's health.

For my friend and master, John Philpot, was very ill. Age and the effect of cares long nursed were now telling with might upon a constitution that had once been strong. They had taken the occasion afforded by an ague fever which had seized on him to show how deeply they had undermined the fine building of his body. John Philpot was confined to his room and his bed; he was very weak, and Geoffrey St. Ange, the king's own leech, who had visited him, gave it as his opinion that unless some change speedily took place, it was doubtful whether he would survive the attack.

A week ago Sir John Philpot had accepted the invitation of his old friend Twiford to sup with him at his house in Maiden Lane.

It had been the custom for each to sup with the other at their respective dwellings on certain fixed nights in the year; and though on this occasion there might have been found a reasonable excuse in the growing infirmities of Master Philpot for his not going, he had insisted upon keeping up the custom. "Did they want to treat him as an old man? He was, thank God, hale enough for that at least." So he went and supped with Nicholas Twiford, but in coming home he caught cold, the cold settled on his throat and lungs, causing him much irritation, and obstinately refusing to yield to the treatment of his attendants. He grew weak under the attacks of such an enemy, and took to his bed, but even that fortress did not protect him. The enemy waxed stronger as he became weaker, till at length fears were entertained for his life. He himself was aware of his danger, and patiently awaited the result of his trial. He had lived through many years of eventful times, and was getting somewhat wearied with the world and its cares. It was without anxiety that he saw the approach of death, though he did not wish to take refuge in its folds from the troubles of life, if it should be the will of God to continue him longer exposed to them.

His chief care — indeed, his only care — was his daughter. To leave her was to die, and to know that the watchful tenderness which had guarded her from her birth was to be hers no more, was to him the bitterness of death. For himself he had no thought — he was not afraid of death — his life had the general approval of his fellows, who sincerely mourned over the prospect of losing him, and for that higher approval which all who see salvation must win, he humbly hoped to find it in the firm hold and belief he had in the merits of his Saviour.

All that skill and leechcraft could do had been done for him, and when the remedies of the wise men failed, those which the ignorant and foolish (so the trained physicians designated the more homely practitioners who were cunning in the use of herbs, and often effected cures in cases given over by the learned) prescribed were tried. But all were powerless to do more than delay the coming of the last enemy that shall be destroyed.

Recourse had even been had by those who loved John Philpot, and also believed in the power of magic, to arts of which he would strenuously have condemned the use had he known of his friends' intention. Deep and long were the consultations held in the murky den where Malachi Balthazar, the astrologer of Barbican, pondered the fates. The heavenly bodies were inquired of, and subtle calculations were made, with a view to ascertaining the probable issue of the present sickness, and the aid of all spirits disembodied was invoked on behalf of the sick man. But nothing favourable could be elicited.

Malachi augured ill from the strange position of certain stars in the sky ; he disliked the appearance of the large polished stone, cut into the shape of a human eye, which an Egyptian had wrought in the time when Israel learned the abominations of the Egyptians, and which changed colour when consulted about a case that would end badly ; and the thread of John Philpot's life, which Malachi said he could trace, was worn, as he declared, to a gossamer fineness. The Jew prophesied evil, and confessed his inability to avert it.*

* Malachi Balthazar was bold, considering the treatment one of his brotherhood received only two years before, as thus described by Walsingham

A CERTAIN QUACK PHYSICIAN, PUT ON HORSEBACK, RECEIVES THE
REWARD OF HIS LYING.

At that time a certain quack, pretending that he was a physician and astrologer, caused it to be proclaimed throughout the city that no one on the Vigil of our Lord's Ascension should dare to go out of his bed-room before he should have said the Lord's Prayer five times, and broken his fast, because of the pestilent cloud that would come over the place on that day. He also asked, trusting strongly in the foolishness of the citizens, that he might be guarded meantime and suffer punishment if his prophecy should fail. For he foretold that all would die suddenly who should do contrary to what he had advised. Many, therefore, obeying the counsel of a cheat, and believing him, on that day neither went to hear Mass, nor would go out before they had broken their fast.

On the morrow, when the lie could not be hid, he was taken and put upon a horse : and the horse's tail was passed into his hands instead of a rein, and two pots, which in the vulgar "*jordanes*" *vocamus*, were tied together round his neck, with a whetstone, as a token that he had well deserved it by lying ; and so he was led round the whole city, in sight of all the physicians and surgeons, receiving worthy disgrace for his pains.

F. D.

More legitimate, though I believe not more learned, professors feared the worst, and their fear infected the minds of all, though for the most part it was not so much their opinion which gave rise to this fear in others as the strange event that happened in the church of St. Michael, on Cornhill, the same night that Sir John began to ail.

On this night, when certain men were ringing a peal of bells, standing in the loft below the bell-room, there arose a tempest of thunder and lightning, and an ugly-shapen sight appeared to them, coming in at the south window, and lighted on the north, for fear whereof they all fell down and lay as dead, suffering the bells to jangle and ring or not as they listed. When the ringers came to their senses they found certain stones of the north window to be razed and scratched, as if they had been so much butter, printed with a lion's claw three inches deep.*

From this augury, more than anything else, folk believed in the approaching dissolution of my dear friend. Hence the unfeigned anxiety shown by every one when his illness continued without abatement.

Sir Nicholas Brembre, who was, as I have stated in the earlier part of these memoirs, more a client of the king than a friend of the people, and had been so far successful in his hostile courses towards the latter as to oust Sir John Philpot, notwithstanding all his services to the state, from his aldermanry, and had in other ways shown an unfriendly spirit—even he appeared concerned at the prospect of losing a citizen like this, and came, therefore, to greet him and to cheer him up.

Poor old Margaret, who had outlived her power but not her wish to be helpful, fretted herself sadly at being obliged to take an inferior office about her dying master, and her tongue, quiet enough when she busied herself in the sick-room, rattled garrulously when she returned to the freer quarters of the buttery and

* This is a verbatim account of what was apparently a striking of the church by lightning; the "ugly-shapen sight" must have been visible, one would think, to the mental rather than the physical eye of the ringers.

kitchen, against herself for being old, and against every one else for not being so brisk as she had been at their age.

Peter Wall and Philip Aubert helped the good woman to complain, and urged the use of remedies "which had never been known to fail," such as broth made from fresh-killed mice, an infusion of camomile made during the recital of matins, and other medicaments equally efficacious. Archdale, whose quick mind apprehended that the greatest service he could render his master was to relieve him as much as possible of the business cares which were his, devoted himself to the discharge of that which required to be done in the many different offices which Sir John filled; and so thoroughly did he so that his assiduity gave occasion to those who should have known better, to say that he neglected his master for the sake of his master's business, which he hoped to inherit. But Archdale cared not what other people *thought*, so long as he *did* what would be assisting to his sick master.

All did their best and heartiest, but Alice was chief nurse and comforter. Her hands brought her father's food, and smoothed his pillow, her face looked lovingly on him as he lay on his dying bed, and brightened with its beauty his closing hours. In it was centered all the comfort which earth could yield him; he loved the fair maiden—and she was fair—with the fulness of a father's love and with the tenderness of a mother's. She was at once the cause of his anxiety and the relief from it. But for her he could have been quite content to leave the world and its cares for that happier state where cares do not enter.

It was on the tenth day after he was first obliged to keep his bed that he allowed himself to speak his thoughts upon this great object of his anxiety. He had set the rest of his affairs in order, provided for the distribution of his property, and even given directions respecting the place and manner of his funeral, which he desired might be such as became him, but not extravagant, holding it, as he said, a mockery to use so much ceremony towards a soulless corpse, yet wishing to avoid falling into the trick of singularity by affecting bareness in this respect. He had seen to all these, reserving, as it appeared, his weightiest care to the last.

His old and faithful friend, John Wyclif, with the account of whose trial in St. Paul's these memoirs were begun, had been with him, having journeyed up from Lutterworth when he heard that John Philpot was ill. Wyclif, venerable now, and standing within a very little of the grave's brink, battered by the storms which had blown upon him, and looking forward to rest, had come, as it were, to ask his friend to give notice on the other side of his intention to follow, as follow he did within a very few months. He had spoken comfort to the dying man, and having easily absolved him from his confessed sins of omission and commission, had given him the sacrament of the Eucharist. It was an hour after this had been done that Alice, who would not leave her father's room, came to the door, and drawing aside the curtain, saw me and told me I was sent for.

There was a strange agitation among my senses never before felt. Why should not my master send for me? Had he not often done so? Surely. But then there was something special in the present summons. Special in reference to what? I scarcely knew, or rather I could not analyse my feelings sufficiently to know. Perhaps there was the consciousness that the number of summonses I could receive from him might now be counted with a very small numeral, and that this might be the last. More probably uncertainty as to the nature of the communication to be made, conflicting with hope that it might be what I ardently desired, was the cause of this emotion.

I say uncertainty of the communication, for it must now be told that though my love for Alice was a fact indeed—to me a fact that dated from the time when I came an orphan to London from Brooklet, and took up my abode seven years ago in Master Philpot's house, when Alice engaged me at once in her service and showed me the peacocks which Philip Aubert had brought her from Bordeaux—a fact which had been of gradual but sure growth in strength, influencing all my life and actions, and giving me a living reason, in addition to the memorial one of my dead father's dying wish, for living like a man worthy of the respect of other men and of the love of a good woman; though this had been a

grand fact to me, and known also to Alice since the day when Sir Hugh Calverley and Master Philpot surprised us in the passage on the eve of departure on the Earl of Buckingham's expedition, yet my master had never spoken to me of that he certainly knew. Not once, save by allusions, had he ever shown that he was aware of it; but aware he was, and I took it as a sign that he was not displeased that he forbore to mention the matter to me with a view to checking it.

Something whispered me that it was on this subject he now desired to speak to me.

Drawing aside Alice, in whose face I detected some of the emotion that was agitating me, I asked her if she knew the reason of my being sent for.

"I think I do, Hubert," she said.

"And is there hope, Alice?" I inquired, assuming that she guessed what was passing in my mind.

Her eyes drooped and tears fell from them. She tried to smile through the rain that wetted her cheeks. I raised her right hand and kissed it, and, contented to go without her answer till doubt had been resolved into certainty by him who sent for me, I stepped into the sick-room, and went up to my master's bed-side.

"Hubert," he said, in a voice that lacked altogether the sternness which it had been his habit to use in speaking to me, "I have sent for you to speak of a matter that lies very near my heart, as I think it does near yours. Rather more than seven years ago, when my honoured friend your father travelled the road on which I am bound, he made me a request that I would see to you and help you on your journey through the world. As far as in me lay I have done this, and you may be able to acknowledge hereafter that I have been faithful to your father's trust.

"Do not interrupt me now!" he said, as I was about to break in with my ready and grateful confession that he had been faithful indeed. "I do not urge this by way of bidding for thanks; my reward is full in seeing you as you are. All that I meant by reminding you of the time was to trace the connection which has been between us, and to impress upon

you more strongly the importance of the trust I am about to commit to you.

"You have been a faithful servant to me, and have done thoroughly whatsoever your hand has found to do; you have gained credit both in my service and in that of your country. Men like Sir Robert Knollys and Sir Hugh Calverley respect you, and, as I believe, worthily. For my part, I trust you so implicitly that I am about to confide to you the management of the greater part of my property after my coming death—and perhaps," added Sir John Philpot, fixing his eyes intently on me and speaking with a quivering voice—"perhaps a greater trust than that.

"You have never spoken to me of that I am now going to touch on, and I understand and respect your reasons for your silence. But it is time now to speak.

"Of course I have noticed for a long while past that that sympathy and affection between my Alice and yourself which not unnaturally sprang up when as children you lived like brother and sister, dwelling under the same roof and cherished with the same care, has grown into love of a different and higher order."

The tell-tale blood mounted to my face, and I felt that Alice, who was standing behind me at the foot of the bed, was no less confused at this part of the speech than myself.

"If it be true, Hubert, that you love Alice as a man should love the woman he would make his wife, and if Alice loves you, then let me say that I shall rejoice and be happy in these my last moments to think that the child which my dear wife left me as the sweetest memorial of herself is the wife of a man whom I love for his father's sake and still more for his own. You are that man, Hubert."

The old man paused here, as if expecting me to speak, while across my mind flashed the recollection of the death-bed where my "other" father died, of the words which he spoke to me, and of all the events which had happened since. Of course there was no reason for hesitating to answer, yet for a moment I stood like one unready, doubting, and halting between two opinions.

It was the deep voice of John Wyclif which brought me back to my senses, or rather brought them back from their wanderings.

"What ails thee, lad? Canst thou not answer?" asked he, as I stood, not hesitating, certainly, but too thoroughly moved to speak till my heart beat more slowly.

"I am overcome by this kindness, sir," I replied as soon as I recovered myself.

"Take time, lad—do not hurry!" said he; "'t is like enough you are moved, for 't is not every day you are asked so great a question about so fair a maiden. Fair indeed, and good as fair," he added by way of afterthought; a speech—for John Wyclif was incapable of so much, or so little, falsehood as goes to make a compliment—that was delivered as an oracular one, not intended for any one in particular, and least of all for Alice, upon whom the compliment, had it been meant for such, would have been utterly thrown away, for she had flitted from the room when she perceived herself to be the subject of her father's speech.

It was not long ere I found words to tell my dying friend something of what I felt on hearing him. It is needless to recite the language in which I begged him to make good by his grant the offer of happiness which he had made to me, or to tell how Alice was discovered and brought back, how she was persuaded to confess the soft impeachment which was made against her, and how John Wyclif, stern Reformer though he was, and mighty enemy when he girded himself for the wordy war, was genial and kind-hearted when theology was not his suit, and declared himself doubtful how far the Church empowered him to absolve on confession of such grave facts. Suffice it to say that Sir John Philpot had an assurance from the pair of us that he had not ill divined the thoughts of our hearts, and we received his blessing and his consent to our marriage.

"It had better not be deferred long," said he, when, fatigued with so much talking, he had to request that he might be left alone awhile. "I should like to see my son-in-law before I die. Do not put it off."

So in accordance with Sir John's wish, and as much as the reader may choose to think with our own inclination, the marriage between Alice Philpot and myself was celebrated within a week of the day on which it had been agreed to by Sir John.

The circumstances under which of necessity it took place, the cause for hurrying it, the absence of the most honoured guest, and the anxiety which pervaded every breast in consequence, sobered, though they did not annul, the joyousness of the wedding. Good wishes were not the less warmly expressed, kind and loving tongues wagged none the less sincerely, for the *memento mori* which could not but be a guest at our table. Happiness was the more real for being chastened, and the immediate need there seemed likely to be for the exercise of our united loves in a common trial, gave additional strength to the knot which made them *one*.

Archdale, Oswald Barnes, Will Allein, Arthur Trewin, and all my jolly companions came to wish me all good wishes on this the happiest day in my life. Sir Hugh Calverley, that valiant commander, did not disdain to come to the wedding banquet, and thither, too, came Sir John Philpot's friends—Sir William Walworth acted for him as the host—Sir Nicholas Twiford, John Barnes, Sir Robert Knollys, and many more, who, with wives and daughters, made up a gay company to honour my bride and to wish us God speed.

One face there was that used to be present at Sir John's gatherings that was not now represented—that of Sir Nicholas Brembre, the proud mayor; not but he had been invited. Sir John would not suffer the question to be debated whether a man even so obnoxious as the lord mayor was to many, so hostile as he had shown himself towards the citizens—and especially towards Sir John—should be asked. Sufficient that he had been in the habit of coming—let him be asked still—this was not a time for him (Sir John) to be drawing distinctions and making likes and dislikes—he was in perfect charity with Sir Nicholas as with all the world. So the lord mayor was invited, but he would not come; conscious of the hatred of the citizens for him, he dreaded

or hated their company. He kept away from us, and no man regretted him.

But others there were whom I would fain have seen—D'Arcy and Sir Walter Hood—who slept the iron sleep, and could not awake to be present at the marriage.

We were married at the church of St. Michael by the great Reformer himself, who would not allow any other priest to “meddle in this his special business.” The banquet, in the preparation of which you may readily believe old Margaret had her part, as she had had her part in all “Philpot hospitalities for forty-five years come Marti'mas,” was given in the Magna Charta room, the same where the conference of the London magnates was held when the address was prepared which Oswald lost at the spurrier's on London Bridge. Philip Aubert, who asserted his right as Sir John Philpot's oldest servant, acted as congratulator-general on behalf of his fellows, and in a long address, containing allusions to many matters which had little or no connection with that now toward, and in making which he was efficiently aided by the loudly-pronounced promptings of Peter Wall—these two worthies having concocted the oration between them—wished long life and happiness to the newly-wedded, and begged leave to drink the pledge in a loving cup.

The malady, which surely enough had fixed on John Philpot with a grasp not to be shaken off, allowed him yet so much of life that he was spared to us for several weeks after our marriage. Then the omens and forebodings of Malachi Balthazar began to have their fulfilment. The fever, which had racked him so fiercely as to have killed a weaker man, had left him helplessly feeble, and now a final attack was made which proved too much for his strength. Death laid claim to another victim, and his claim was allowed. John Philpot succumbed.

“Take care of her! May God bless you both!” these were the last words he was able to articulate. He referred to Alice, and he spoke to me.

My wife says I have not been heedless of this last injunction laid upon me, and for my part I cease not to bless the Dispenser

of all good gifts, who has showered so many benefits upon me, for having given me, as on the day set forth in these pages, the fairest and most loving wife that ever blessed the heart of man. We have lived together these many years in one sweet continuance of concord ; together we have travelled the greatest part of the road between Time and Eternity, and been witnesses to many things of which it were over-long to write ; but this one sight we have never seen, nor is it possible we ever should see it—a happier, cheerier, or a more loving pair than Alice and her husband,

HUBERT ELLIS.

[Here end these memoirs of Hubert Ellis, who was a wealthy merchant of London, much noted for the part he played at the times of the troubles towards the end of King Richard's reign. He lived to a great age, and died in the reign of Henry V.]

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.



IT may be expected that, as the Editor of the foregoing memoirs, I should add a few words of my own before considering my task to be done. I shall take advantage, therefore, of a spare page or so to make a few remarks.

Not without regret do I lay down my pen, which has travelled so long and so willingly in the writing of this story. Having, by the close intimacy which has existed between me and the characters set forth in these pages, become thoroughly acquainted with them, I have got to like them so well, that to quit them is like taking leave of cherished friends; and there is, I fear, no chance of pursuing their history further. What became of Archdale, Oswald, Allein, and Arthur Trewin; how old Margaret, and Philip, and Peter ended their days; whether little Peter Wall was sickened or confirmed in his liking for the bottle which he entertained at the early age of seven; and how Hubert Ellis and his wife—of whom, in his old age, he speaks so lovingly—fared, one would like to know. But these smaller incidents in the life of the nation are, of necessity, among those “spoils of Time” which Knowledge has not preserved upon “her ample page.” They are but some of the atoms which go to make up historical facts; of themselves they were not deemed worthy to be written in history, any more than will the family scenes and traditions of our own homes live, save in the general, though they be none the less loved and enjoyed by us in the particular.

For this very reason are the facts here collected, giving us an insight into the life and manners of King Richard’s people. The

fault is mine if I have not put them forward in such a way as to make them interesting.

The subsequent career of some of the actors in the scenes described is, of course, to be found in history, though it is to be regretted that in some cases — as in the case of Wyclif — writers should have allowed their prejudices so to sway them as to make them paint a picture, not *absolutely* true, as all history should be, but true only according to the bias which their own prejudices have given them.

Of this prejudiced order is the account given by Thomas Walsingham, monk of St. Alban's — the most trustworthy chronicler we have of the events in Richard II.'s time — of John Wyclif's death :

“OF THE DEATH OF JOHN WICLEFF.

“On the day of Saint Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury and martyr, that diabolical instrument, enemy of the Church, confuser of the vulgar, idol of heretics, mirror of hypocrites, introducer of schism, spreader of hatred, maker of a lie — John Wiclif, as he was about to spue forth the invectives and blasphemies against Saint Thomas which he had, it is said, prepared for his sermon on that day, struck suddenly by the judgment of God, felt a paralysis to have invaded all his limbs. His mouth, which had spoken monstrous things against God and his saints, or the Church, miserably distorted from its place, exhibited a spectacle horrible to beholders,” &c., &c.

That Wyclif died at Lutterworth, after the last of several paralytic strokes, is an historical fact; the largest portion of the passage is but an expression of feeling by a bitter political and ecclesiastical opponent. Wyclif may or may not have been all that the monk says of him; but the only absolute truth contained in the passage is that Wyclif died towards the end of 1384. As regards the exact day there is a little doubt. Walsingham says it was St. Thomas's Day (21st December), and Knyghton, the other reliable historian of the period, says it was the Innocents' Day (28th December).

This is what Walsingham says of Sir John Philpot: “A man

who more than all had laboured, and honourably, for the liberties of the community." And, on the occasion of his death: "In this summer died the most noble Sir John Philpot, Knight, and citizen of London, who had toiled more than all for the kingdom and its advantage, and more frequently than all had relieved the king and kingdom with his money and advice."

The fate of some of the other persons mentioned may be gathered from the following extract from Hardyng's rhyming chronicle of Richard II.:

"Sir Nichol Brëbyr (Brembre) of London y^t was mayre,
Tresilyan also, and syr Symonde Bourley,
Whiche they exyled, and some they honge unfeyre,
Some they heded, that tyme that was full gaye.
Holt and Belknap exyled were awaye
In to Irelande, for hye contriued treasone
Agayne the kynge and his royall crowne."

This happened in 1387-8.

Sir William Walworth—of whom Stowe, in his *Survey of London*, says that, "being a man, wise, learned, and of an incomparable manhood, (he) arrested Wat Tyler, a presumptuous rebel, upon whom no man durst lay hand, whereby he delivered the king and kingdom from most wicked tyranny of traitors"—died in 1385, and was buried "in the north chapel by the choir" of St. Michael's Church, Crooked Lane.

Whether I have succeeded in surmounting the difficulty expressed in the introductory chapter, "of investing a story laid in such remote times as those of Richard II. with sufficient attractions to make it interesting," is not for me to say. I hope I have done so, and that my conscientious efforts to attain so desirable an end have met the approval of my readers.

If I have contrived to win this; if my setting forth of Hubert Ellis's memoirs have served to beguile some unoccupied hours; and if I have succeeded in calling up by my descriptions a desire in my readers to search further for knowledge about an old order which has changed, "giving place to new," and so to learn how "God fulfils Himself in many ways" in the course of a nation's

life, the object I had in undertaking this work will have been accomplished.

In order to assist any who may be desirous of thus inquiring for themselves, and because I do not wish to make a secret of the sources of my information, I append a list of the authorities which have been specially consulted for the purposes of this story. They are as follow :

1. *Liber Albus* : a collection of documents relating to the city of London, and taken from the archives at Guildhall.
2. *Eulogium Historiarum*. 3 vols.
3. *The Chronicle of Thomas Walsingham, monk of St. Alban's*.
4. *Political Songs and Poems, from the time of Edward II. to that of Henry V.*
5. *Stowe's Annals*.
6. *Stowe's Survey of London*.
7. *Bailey's History of the Tower*.
8. *Grose's Military Antiquities*.
9. *Hardyng's Rhyming Chronicle of Richard II.*
10. *Knyghton's Chronicle*.
11. *Addison's History of the Knights Templars*.

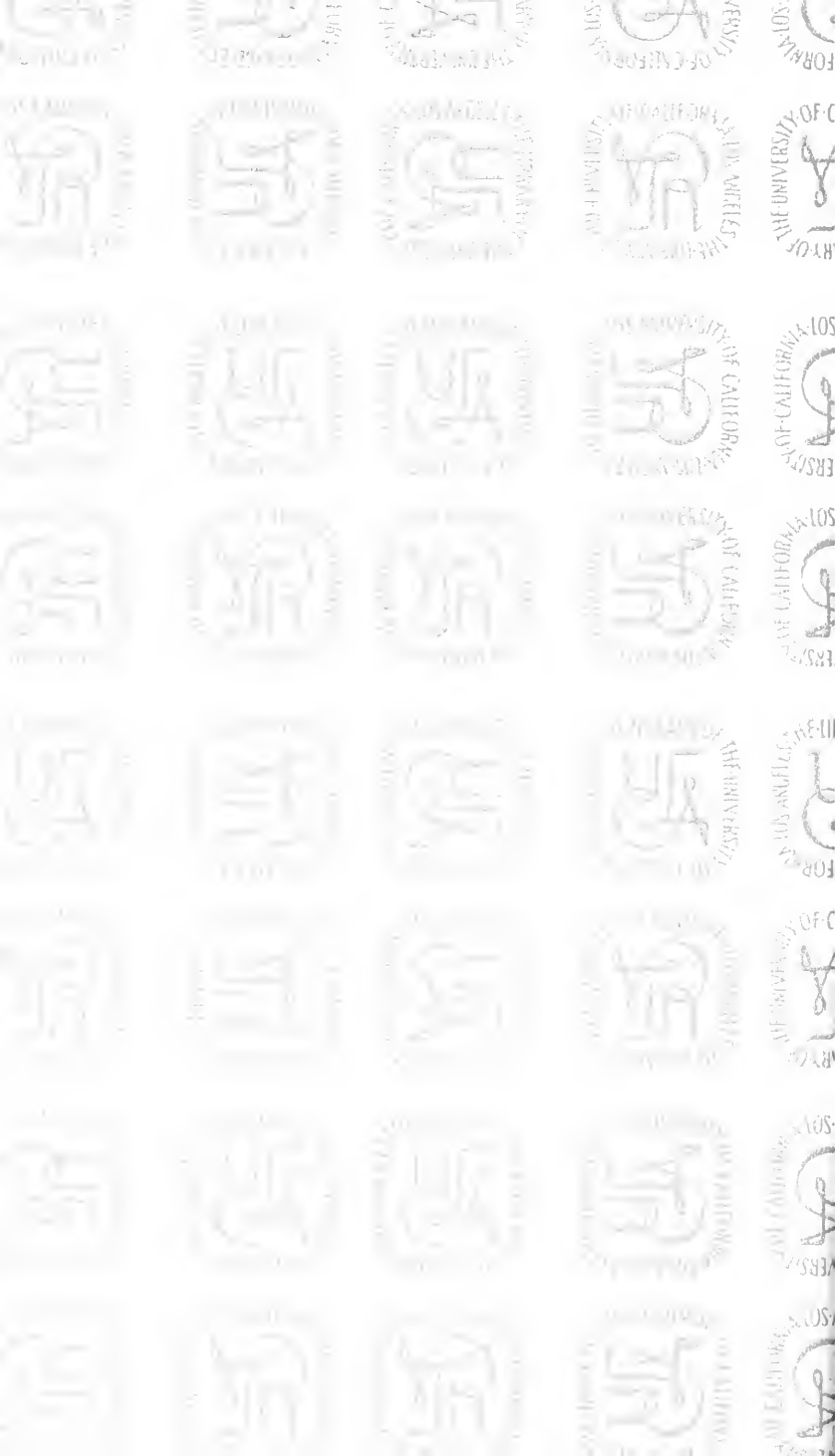
FRANCIS DAVENANT.

Temple, August, 1866.



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